

Hate sign or silly game? Military academies probe hand signs

By MARY ESCH
Associated Press

When is OK not okay?
Some West Point cadets and U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen flashed what looked like a sideways OK finger gesture during a live television broadcast over the weekend at the Army-Navy football game. Now military officials are probing their intentions. Was it an affirmation? An innocent made-you-look "circle game?" Or a sinister white supremacy signal? Screenshots and clips of the hand gestures captured by cameras at Saturday's game in Philadelphia went viral on social media. Some Twitter users condemned the gesture as a "white power" sign.



Navy midshipmen celebrate a Navy touchdown during the second half of an NCAA college football game, Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019, in Philadelphia. Navy won 31-7.

Continued on Page 2

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Hate sign or silly game? Military academies probe hand signs

Continued from Front

Others called it the “got-cha” or “circle game” popular with children, where someone flashes an upside-down OK sign below his waist and punches in the shoulder anyone who looks at it.

The circle game, around for generations, was featured in the early 2000s sitcom “Malcolm in the Middle” and has made a resurgence as a photo-bomb prank in sports team photos—along the same line as “bunny ears” fingers. In more recent years, it be-

came an internet meme in a online game of “got-cha.”

But the Anti-Defamation League said the gesture, with the thumb and forefinger touched in a circle and the other fingers outstretched, has also been appropriated as a signal for white supremacy. That started as a hoax perpetuated on the online message board 4chan. The original idea was to take an innocent and common gesture and arbitrarily transform it into something that would enrage liberals. The campaign was so suc-



In this Dec. 14, 2019 file photo, Navy midshipmen march onto field ahead of an NCAA college football game between the Army and the Navy in Philadelphia.

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cessful, the gesture came to be used semi-sincerely by Neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klansmen and other white nationalists to signal sympathizers in public places. Brenton Tarrant, the white supremacist accused of killing 50 people at two New Zealand mosques, flashed the sign to reporters at a court hearing last March. Mini-scandals involving the hand gesture have become regular media fodder. In 2018, the U.S. Coast Guard suspended an officer who appeared to be making the hand sign during a Hurricane Florence television broadcast. A high school in a Chicago suburb yanked all copies of its yearbook from distribution amid concerns about a photo in which students displayed the gesture. The Chicago Cubs last May banned a fan from games after he flashed the symbol

behind a broadcaster. The true intentions of the cadets and midshipmen who were recorded making the gesture while smiling and laughing during Saturday's game are unclear. Heidi Beirich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's intelligence project which investigates hate groups and extremism, said it was important that the military schools investigate to find out the context for the students and future active-duty military members using the symbol. "Do the investigation, find out if it was harmless or not," she said. "If these people are influenced by white supremacy, they can't be allowed to continue in the military." There have been long-standing concerns about white supremacists in the military. In 2008, an FBI report found white suprema-

Associated Press

cist leaders were making a concerted effort to recruit active-duty soldiers and recent combat veterans. A Military Times poll in 2017 found more than 30% of service members saw white nationalism as a significant threat to national security. The Pentagon reaffirmed military policies forbidding extremist advocacy in 2017, after the Anti-Defamation League reported a Marine staff sergeant was the leader of the white supremacist group Vanguard at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Against the backdrop of concerns about hate groups in the military, both the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, said they have appointed officers to investigate the motivations behind the hand signals flashed by their students. □



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'Obamacare' tax repeal added to \$1.4T wrap-up spending bill

By **ANDREW TAYLOR**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Retired coal miners and longtime opponents of Obama-era taxes on high-cost health plans are eyeing big wins as top congressional leaders and the Trump White House close in on a deal on a government-wide spending bill that's also carrying lots of overdue Washington business.

The bill would also increase the age nationwide for purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21.

The legislation would forestall a government shutdown this weekend and give President Donald Trump steady funding for his U.S.-Mexico border fence. The year-end package is anchored by a \$1.4 trillion spending measure that caps a difficult, months-long battle over spending priorities.

The roster of add-ons grew over the weekend to include permanent repeal of a tax on high-cost "Cadillac" health insurance benefits and finance health care and pension benefits for 92,000 retired union coal miners threatened by the insolvency of their pension fund. A tax on medical devices and health insurance plans would also be repealed permanently.

The deficit tab for the package grew as well — almost \$400 billion alone over 10 years to repeal the three so-called "Obamacare" taxes alone — with a companion package to extend several business-friendly tax breaks still under negotiation. The Obama-era taxes have previously been suspended on a piecemeal basis.

The late-stage negotiations involved House

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and other top leaders on Capitol Hill. The package is expected to be unveiled at midday Monday for a House vote on Tuesday and the Senate is expected to vote by Thursday or Friday. The developments were described by Democratic and GOP aides who asked for anonymity because the measure was not yet public.

The legislation is laced with provisions reflecting divided power in Washington.

The sweeping legislation, likely to be broken up into two packages for political purposes, is part of a major final burst of legislation that's passing Congress this week despite bitter divisions and Wednesday's likely impeachment of Trump. Thursday promises a vote on a major rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The core of the bill is formed by the 12 annual agency appropriations bills passed by Congress each year. It fills in the details of a bipartisan framework from July that delivered about \$100 billion in agency spending increases over the coming two years instead of automatic spending cuts that would have sharply slashed both the Pentagon and domestic agencies.

The increase in the tobacco purchasing age to 21 does not appear to address broader issues of regulating so-called vaping products, but details of the measure are likely to be released early Monday afternoon, aides said.

Other add-ons include a variety of provisions sought by business and labor interests and their lobbyists in Washington.

For business, there's a seven-year extension of the charter of the Export-Import Bank, which helps finance transactions benefiting U.S. exporters, as well as a renewal of the government's terrorism risk insurance program. The financially-troubled government flood insurance program would be extended through September.

Labor won repeal of the so-called Cadillac tax, a 40% tax on high-cost employer health plans, which was originally intended to curb rapidly growing health care spending. But it disproportionately affected high-end plans won under union contracts, and Democratic labor allies had previously succeeded in temporary repeals.



The U.S. Capitol in Washington is shrouded in mist, Friday night, Dec. 13, 2019.

Associated Press

Democrats controlling the House would win increased funding for early childhood education and a variety of other domestic programs. They also won higher Med-

icaid funding for the cash-poor government of Puerto Rico, which is struggling to recover the hurricane devastation and a resulting economic downturn. □



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U.S., Mexico quickly mend rift over North American trade deal

By **LUIS ALONSO LUGO and PAUL WISEMAN**

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and Mexico moved quickly Monday to defuse a dispute over President Donald Trump's revamped North American trade pact.

At issue are five labor attaches the United States intends to send to Mexico to oversee the Mexican government's labor reforms. Those plans were revealed

Friday when the U.S. published the implementing legislation for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement — the legal text of the pact that the U.S. Congress will vote on.

Over the weekend, Mexico's top trade negotiator, Jesús Seade, complained that Mexico had been blindsided by the provision on the attaches.

All along, Mexican negotiators have rejected the idea that American offi-

cials could roam the country, inspecting factories to make sure Mexico was living up to commitments to let workers organize unions and bargain for higher wages and better working conditions.

Seade took to Twitter to declare: "Mexico will NEVER accept them if it is in any way about disguised inspectors, for one simple reason: Mexican law prohibits it."

It was unclear what Mexico



Jesus Seade, Mexican undersecretary to North America, is followed by journalists as he leaves following a meeting with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer in Washington, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

could actually do about the attaches: Its Senate had already ratified the trade agreement. Seade said the U.S. attaches were not mentioned in the pact the Mexicans had agreed to.

"My suspicion is that these attaches will take a big-picture view and focus on egregious situations and point those out and give notice to the Mexican government," said Miguel Noyola, a partner at Baker & McKenzie LLP, who specializes in business in Mexico and Latin America. "I don't think they will just be going on fishing expeditions."

And Seade, after meeting with Lighthizer in Washington Monday, told reporters: "I am satisfied. And I called the authorities in Mexico, and they are satisfied."

Earlier, Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard minimized the dispute saying that the pact remained "intact" and Mexico did not feel tricked by the provision on the attaches.

The USMCA replaces the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement, which tore down most trade barriers between the United States, Canada and Mexico. NAFTA triggered a

surge in trade between the three countries. But Trump and other critics said it cost the United States jobs by encouraging factories to move south of the border to take advantage of low-wage Mexican laborers, who were largely prevented from forming independent unions.

Trump demanded a rewrite and strong-armed Mexico and Canada into going along and signing USMCA. But the revamped regional trade deal needs to be approved by the U.S. Congress, and Democrats in the House demanded — and got — beefed-up language meant to ensure that Mexico goes through with promised labor reforms, including those designed to encourage independent unions.

Daniel Ujcz, chair of the international practice at Dickinson Wright PLLC in Columbus, Ohio, said there was "some theater in all of this as a result of the Democrats taking victory laps last week. It is making it difficult for Mexico to save face in light of some significant, yet necessary, concessions to get the deal done." It was, he said, "necessary for Mexico to show some pushback." □

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9 die in wintry crashes in several Midwestern states

BONNE TERRE, Mo. (AP) —

At least nine people have died in weather-related crashes in several Midwestern states amid a storm that dumped nearly a foot of snow in places, forced schools to close and snarled traffic, authorities said. The wintry weather was part of a storm system that hit parts of the Midwest and was expected to extend into the Northeast through Tuesday, the National Weather Service said.

In Missouri, the storm dumped 3 to 9 inches (7.6 to 22.9 centimeters) of snow across of the state. Much of Missouri was under either a winter weather advisory or winter storm warning Monday.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol said three people were killed Sunday night when a driver lost control and overturned on U.S. 67 in St. Francois County in the eastern part of the state. A motorist who was stranded after a previous crash and two good Samaritans who were trying to help were struck.

And in mid-Missouri's Callaway County, an 18-year-old was killed when his vehicle went off the side of Missouri 94 and overturned. The patrol also said in a tweet Sunday night that it had responded to 525 calls from stranded motorists and to nearly 560 other traffic crashes. The University of Missouri was starting classes late Monday because of the storm.

In Nebraska, a crash Sunday on Interstate 80 northeast of Lincoln left three passengers ages 10, 15 and 19 dead. The crash happened when the driver of an eastbound sport utility vehicle lost control amid slick conditions, struck another eastbound vehicle before veering into the median, rolling and entering the westbound lanes. The SUV was then hit by a car and a pickup truck, according to the Nebraska State Patrol.

In Kansas, the storm brought up to 11 inches

(27.9 centimeters) of snow. The Kansas Department of Transportation said multiple roads are partially or completely snow covered. A 21-year-old man died Sunday when a pickup truck in which he was riding overturned on an icy Wichita road.

Weather also is believed to be a factor in a Mon-

day collision between an SUV and a pickup truck that killed a woman and her adult son along a road east of Indianapolis following a night of snowfall, police said. Fifty-four-year-old Amy Cox and her 24-year-old son, Isaac Cox, of New Palestine, were pronounced dead at the scene. □



Washington University sophomore Jonah Goldberg uses a sled to keep the falling snow out of his face as he and his friends walk back to their dorm after sledding at Art Hill in Forest Park, Mo., Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Navidad Menu

Amuse Bouche & Sparkling Bubbles

Appetizer

Christmas Garden Greens
Mixed greens, cucumber, carrots, caramelized walnuts, goat cheese and raspberry herbs vinaigrette

or

Oxtail Broth
Served with oxtail ravioli, tomato concasse and green onions

or

Braised Pork Cheeks and Crispy Pork Belly
Slowly braised pork cheeks and crispy pork belly, served with cous-cous, baby lettuce and mango salsa

Main Course

Christmas Platter with Turkey and Smoked Ham
Glazed turkey breast and slices of smoked ham, served with apple-bacon stuffing, red cabbage, skin on mashed potatoes and rosemary gravy sauce

or

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or

Salmon Florentine with Shrimp
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Dessert

Christmas Surprise Dome
It is a surprise but you have to love chocolate and nuts

or

Bombe Alaska with Cointreau
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or

Warm Cinnamon Apple Strudel
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In this Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 photo, officials respond to the scene of a mercury spill on the intersection of Westview Drive and West Sam Houston Parkway North.

Associated Press

FBI: 19-year-old arrested, charged in Houston mercury spill

HOUSTON (AP) — A 19-year-old man has been arrested after mercury was found spilled in Houston, leading dozens of people to be decontaminated as a precaution, FBI said Monday. The agency's Houston office said on Twitter that Christopher Lee Melder has been charged with burglary and unlawful disposal of hazardous material. He is also charged on an outstanding felony drug possession warrant. It wasn't immediately known whether he had a lawyer and authorities didn't immediately say if the spills were intentional. City officials said, according to the FBI, he took the mercury from a lab he broke into. The lab's location hasn't been released. Someone called 911 around 11:15 a.m. Sunday to report a white liquid on the ground, Houston Fire Chief Sam Pena has said. Officials later determined that less than a pint of mercury was spilled outside a Walmart, a Sonic Drive-In and gas station. Officials said about 60 people were found to have trace amounts of mercury contamination near their feet and shoes and were decontaminated at the scene as a precaution. Houston's Office of Emer-

gency Management spokesman Cory Stottler said that in order to be decontaminated, people had to remove their clothes and shoes and take a shower on site. They were then given clothing to leave in. The fire chief added that one woman was taken to a hospital as a precaution because she was pregnant. Police said it was unclear when the toxic metal was spilled. Authorities also said they're looking into reports that someone checked into a hospital Friday in Harris County, where Houston is located, claiming to have been exposed to mercury. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mercury exists in three forms. Elemental mercury is liquid at room temperature. It is used in some thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs and electrical switches. High mercury vapor concentrations can cause severe lung damage, the CDC said. Dr. David Persse with the Houston Health Department said that because all three spills happened outdoors, the risk to people in the area was "extremely low." □



This photo shows some damage by a tornado in Alexandria, La., Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Louisiana: Apparent twister destroys buildings, 1 dead

By JAY REEVES and JANET McCONNAUGHEY

Strong storms moving across the Deep South killed at least one person Monday and left a trail of smashed buildings, splintered trees and downed power lines the week before Christmas. Forecasters issued multiple tornado warnings and some cities opened shelters as a cold front collided with warmer air over northern Gulf Coast states. The National Weather Service said the threat could last overnight into Tuesday. One person died when an apparent tornado struck a small residential area in Vernon Parish, Louisiana, but details were not immediately available, said Chief Deputy Calvin Turner. Officials feared others could be hurt in the area since crews were still trying to reach hard-hit areas where downed trees and power lines blocked roads, he said. "We've got damage at lots of places. We've got a church where the fellowship hall is torn all to pieces. Some homes are hit. Right now we're having trouble just getting to places because of trees that are down," Turner said. In nearby Alexandria, Loui-

siana, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of New Orleans, a sheriff's official said the storm left roads impassable, peeled the roof off of a church and destroyed a car lot. "As of right now we've had people trapped. I don't have any reported injuries," said Capt. Phillip Jordan of the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office. Meteorologist Donald Jones of the National Weather Service office in Lake Charles said it appeared the twister that hit in Alexandria also struck the town of DeRidder on a path that was an "absolutely ridiculous" at 63 miles (101 kilometers) long. "I don't know what our records for the longest total in this area is, but that's got to be pretty damn close to it," he said. The Storm Prediction Center reported two people suffered minor injuries from flying debris after storms moved into Mississippi, and multiple trees fell atop homes and vehicles in Edwards, east of Vicksburg. Schools were opened as shelters as forecasters began issuing tornado warnings in north Alabama. There were no immediate reports of injuries there, but the weather service said the threat of severe weath-

er would continue into the night as a cold front mixed with warmer air. About 20,000 homes and businesses were without power in Louisiana and Mississippi, and outages could spread as storms moved eastward. Tornado watches extended from the Gulf Coast as far north as southern Tennessee, and additional watches and warnings were likely. School systems in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi dismissed students early and canceled afternoon events and activities as a precaution because of the weather threat. Forecasters said tornadoes, hail and winds blowing at 70 mph (115 kph) posed the greatest threat as a cold front moved across the region in an easterly direction. Storms could last until early Tuesday in the eastern areas, forecasters said. Tornadoes in December aren't unusual. Monday was the 19th anniversary of a Southeastern tornado outbreak that produced a twister that killed 11 people in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Storms on Dec. 1, 2018, spawned more than two dozen tornadoes in the Midwest. □

Mississippi man freed months after court rules racial bias

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi man whose murder conviction was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court for racial bias was released from custody Monday for the first time in 22 years.

Curtis Flowers walked out of the regional jail in the central town of Louisville hours after a judge set his bond at \$250,000. A person who wanted to remain anonymous posted \$25,000, the 10% needed to secure Flowers' release, said his attorney Rob McDuff.

At the bond hearing earlier Monday in the city of Winona, Circuit Judge Joseph Loper ordered Flowers to wear an electronic monitor while waiting for the district attorney's office to decide whether to try him a seventh time or drop the charges. Flowers also must check in once a week with a court clerk, McDuff said. He said attorneys would file papers asking the judge to dismiss the charges.

Flowers was accompanied from the jail Monday by his attorneys and two sisters, Priscilla Ward and Charita Baskin. The siblings said they were going home to fry some fish for dinner and hang out together. "It's been rough," Flowers said. "Taking it one day at a time, keeping God first — that's how I got through it." When asked another question, Flowers sighed, smiled and tossed his hands in the air.

"I'm so excited right now, I can't even think straight," he said with a laugh.

Flowers was convicted four times in connection with a quadruple slaying in Winona in 1996: twice for individual slayings and twice for all four killings. Two other trials involving all four deaths ended in mistrials.

Each of the convictions was overturned, but Flowers has remained in jail because the original murder indictment is still active.

During his sixth trial in 2010, Flowers was sentenced to death. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned that conviction in June, finding that

prosecutors had shown an unconstitutional pattern of excluding African American jurors in the trials of Flowers, who is black.

After the Supreme Court ruling, Flowers was moved off death row at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman and taken to the Louisville jail.

During the bond hearing, Loper said it was "troubling" that prosecutors had not responded to a previous defense motion to drop the charges against Flowers. He said if prosecutors do not respond, "the state will reap the whirlwind" from him.

Assistant District Attorney William Hopper left the hearing without speaking to news reporters. He declined to comment when asked if the district attorney's office would try Flowers again.

Supporters who were among the more than 150 people packing the wooden pews of the 1970s-era courtroom hugged Flowers after the judge announced his decision. His father, Archie Lee Flowers, choked back tears. He said the first thing he would do when his son was released, was pray.

The elder Flowers said he frequently visited his son in prison, where they sang and prayed together. He said he has always believed in his son's innocence.

Four people were shot to death on July 16, 1996, in the Tardy Furniture store in the north Mississippi city of Winona. They were owner Bertha Tardy, 59, and three employees: 45-year-old Carmen Rigby, 42-year-old Robert Golden and 16-year-old Derrick "Bobo" Stewart.

A daughter of Tardy was in court Monday. She sat across the aisle and one row back from Flowers' daughter, Crystal Ghoston, who sat in the front row.

Ghoston, 26, told The Associated Press that she had seen her father only once since he was imprisoned: about 10 years ago, and even then she could only talk to him through a reinforced window. She said



Curtis Flowers flanked by sister Priscilla Ward, right, exits the Winston Choctaw Regional Correctional Facility in Louisville, Miss., Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

they wrote letters to each other and spoke on the phone every few weeks, and that he talked about meeting her 2-year-old daughter, who calls him "Paw-Paw."

"We're so much alike," Ghoston said. "We laugh all the time on the phone."

Ghoston, of Grenada, Mississippi, said after her father's release, they will take their first-ever photo together.

Winona sits near the crossroads of Interstate 55, the major north-south artery in

Mississippi, and U.S. Highway 82, which runs east to west. It about a half-hour's drive from the flatlands of the Mississippi Delta. Among its 4,300 residents, about 48% are black and 44% are white. Census Bureau figures show that about 30% live in poverty. In mid-November, four black voters and a branch of the NAACP filed a federal lawsuit asking a judge to permanently order Evans and his assistants to stop using peremptory challenges to remove African Ameri-

can residents as potential jurors because of their race. The lawsuit cites an analysis of jury strikes by Evans from 1992 to 2017 by American Public Media's "In the Dark" podcast. It found Evans' office used peremptory strikes, which lawyers typically don't have to explain, to remove 50% of eligible black jurors, but only 11% of eligible white jurors. The analysis was performed as part of a series of episodes questioning Flowers' conviction in his sixth trial. □

Fake social accounts bring down police chief — and successor

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) —

Hours after the police chief in Vermont's largest city resigned over using a fake social media account to heckle a critic, the mayor announced that the officer acting as chief revealed she too has used a fake account.

Deputy Chief Jan Wright told Burlington's mayor Monday that she used a fake Facebook account to engage citizens in police policy talk.

Mayor Miro Weinberger said that while Wright's fake account was different than former Burlington Police Department Chief

Brandon del Pozo's, it highlights a widespread problem of leadership being caught in the web of social media.

"Given the circumstances the department is facing, I found the failure to raise this issue with me in the lead-up to today to constitute a lapse in judgment," Weinberger said in a statement. As a result, Weinberger named Deputy Chief Jon Murad the new acting chief and said Murad has "confirmed explicitly" to the city attorney that he has never used a fake social media account. Wright was named interim

chief of the department earlier Monday after del Pozo submitted his resignation over backlash from using a fake Twitter account. He's accused of using the anonymous account to respond to a critic for one hour on July 4 before deleting the account.

He had initially lied to a Seven Days newspaper reporter when asked about it in July. Days later, he confessed to the mayor. Weinberger said he had placed him on administrative leave and directed him to turn in his badge, gun and city phone and to stop using social media. □

French pension reform architect resigns as strikes drag on

By SYLVIE CORBET

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron's government suffered a major blow Monday when the key architect of the pension overhaul resigned over alleged conflicts of interests, on the 12th day of transport strikes against the planned changes.

The announcement came at a crucial time: just before a new round of protests planned Tuesday across France and as the government was preparing for last-minute talks with workers' unions ahead of the Christmas season.

The French presidency said Macron accepted "with regret" the resignation of High Commissioner Jean-Paul Delevoye, a 72-year-old politician who prepared the pension plans for two years before being appointed in September to drive the reform program. He was notably in charge of talks with workers' unions and professional organizations.

Macron's office stressed Delevoye's "work and commitment" and said the decision was needed in order to preserve the next steps



In this Sept. 4, 2019 file photo, newly appointed French High Commissioner for Pension Reform Jean-Paul Delevoye, leaves the cabinet meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

Associated Press

of reform.

Delevoye was under fire from the opposition and unions after French newspaper *Le Parisien* and *Le Monde* reported last week that he hadn't mentioned some of his activities in the formal declaration required from all government members to avoid potential conflicts of interests.

Delevoye acknowledged a "mistake," saying he "forgot" to declare several positions, some in the insurance and banking sectors, a think tank and one at the foundation of national rail company SNCF.

Macron's office said Delevoye will be replaced "as soon as possible."

Macron has said he wants

the government to push ahead with the pension changes, which include raising the age of retirement with full pension from 62 to 64 and ending special privileges for some workers. Last week, the government opened the door for new negotiations, suggesting it was ready to make some changes to its plans. Prime

Minister Edouard Philippe is expected to meet with union leaders by the end of the week.

Meanwhile, major unions stated that they want to push the strike through Christmas.

Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire advocated Monday on news broadcaster BFM television for the retirement age of 64 as "a reasonable solution."

He also called on rail workers to end the strikes before the Christmas school holidays that start Friday evening, a period during which millions of French are expected to travel for family celebrations.

The government plans to formally present the pension bill in January. It will then be debated in parliament, where Macron's party has the majority.

Authorities measured a record traffic jam of 630 kilometers (390 miles) Monday morning in the Paris region, where only two Metro lines, using automated trains with no drivers, were fully running. The other 14 metro lines were closed or only very partially running.

Most regional and national trains were at a standstill. □

UK prime minister to welcome new lawmakers to Parliament

By GREGORY KATZ

DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to give a pep talk Monday to a new group of Conservative Party lawmakers as he begins his push to secure parliamentary approval for his Brexit deal.

Johnson will welcome 109 newly elected colleagues, many of them coming from parts of the country that were once strongholds of the opposition Labour Party.

Buoyed by the party's decisive win in last week's election, Johnson will move fast to deliver on his campaign mantra to "get Brexit done." That means ensuring a Brexit withdrawal agreement bill is passed in time for the U.K. to complete its



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, gestures as he speaks to supporters on a visit to meet newly elected Conservative party MP for Sedgefield, Paul Howell, at Sedgefield Cricket Club in County Durham, north east England, Saturday Dec. 14, 2019.

Associated Press

historic departure from the European Union by the current deadline of Jan. 31.

Johnson has promised to bring the bill to the House of Commons before Christmas. It is expected to re-

ceive strong support in Parliament, where Johnson's Conservatives hold a strong majority. The party won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons in Thursday's landslide election. If the bill

passes and Britain leaves the EU on time, the country will enter a transition period when EU rules and regulations would still apply in the country and people and goods would still be able to pass freely between the U.K. and the remaining EU members.

Negotiators for the British government and the EU would start trade talks with an eye toward reaching a comprehensive post-Brexit agreement.

The pomp and ceremony surrounding the queen's speech will be less lavish than usual because she last formally opened Parliament just two months ago for what turned out to be a session that was cut short by a vote for an early election.

New lawmakers took to Twitter to chronicle their

first day at work. The new representative for Bury in northwest England, Christian Wakeford, tweeted: "Reality with a bump, 5:33 train down to #Westminster not a morning person at all but couldn't be happier to be on this train."

Newcastle-under-Lyme lawmaker Aaron Bell shared an image of himself smiling in front of the Palace of Westminster: "Good morning Newcastle. A new dawn has broken, has it not?"

There was no such giddiness on the Labour side as the party prepares for what is likely to be a bruising leadership contest, which is expected to formally begin in early January.

The goal is to have a replacement for Jeremy Corbyn in place by the end of March. □

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Your online Aruba restaurant guide

Germany looks outside EU for nurses, other professionals

By DAVID RISING
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Angela Merkel's government hashed out strategies Monday with German business and union officials on attracting skilled workers from outside the European Union as the country tries to tackle a shortfall of qualified professionals.

Merkel told reporters the first two pillars of her government's approach to the problem would be providing more training for Germans and working to attract professionals from other EU countries.

But recognizing those steps will not be sufficient, Germany needs to recruit workers from outside the trade bloc, she said. To do that, Germany needs to make it easier for skilled workers to get visas to



German Chancellor Angela Merkel attends the weekly cabinet meeting of the German government at the chancellery in Berlin, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019.

Associated Press

quickly start new jobs, and ensure the country is seen as an attractive place to resettle.

"It's not only us who are looking at the world's professionals," she said. "There is great competition in this

area."

Legislation due to take effect March 1 will make it easier for non-EU nationals

to get visas to work and seek jobs in Germany. Arrangements currently applied to university graduates are being expanded to immigrants with professional qualifications and German language knowledge.

Sectors such as information technology and nursing have complained of labor shortages.

"Many companies in Germany are urgently seeking skilled workers, even in times of a weaker economy," Eric Schweitzer, president of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told the Funke newspaper group ahead of the meetings. "For more than half of companies, the shortage of skilled workers is currently the biggest risk to business." □

Central Europe mayors against populism sign free cities pact

Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — The mayors of four Central European capitals signed a "free cities" pact Monday, pledging to cooperate on issues ranging from environmental protection to urban planning and public transportation.

The mayors of Budapest, Hungary; Prague, the Czech Republic; Warsaw, Poland; and Bratislava, Slovakia, who are either independents or from parties in opposition to their respective national governments, also advocated for more direct funding from the Eu-

ropean Union and noted the rise of populism and extremism in their countries.

"We're also witnessing that our region is, in some way, closing from the influence of the free Western world," said Bratislava Mayor Matus Vallo. "Still, in our four capitals we see the highest concentration of diversity. Social, religious, political, ethnic and national."

The signing ceremony was held at a symbolic location, the Budapest home of Central European University. CEU recently was forced to move much of its main activities to Vienna

because of legal changes promoted by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government and centered on his ideological conflict with CEU founder and billionaire George Soros.

Budapest Mayor Gergely Karacsony offered his city's office in Brussels to the other members of the pact to help them lobby for more direct funding to municipalities and other autonomous bodies. "In the past decade, a significant part of EU funds have landed at the companies of oligarchs close to power," Karacsony said. □



The mayors of the capitals of the V4 countries Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, Zdenek Hrib of Prague, Gergely Karacsony of Budapest, Matus Vallo of Bratislava, and Rafal Trzaskowski of Warsaw pose after their meeting in the auditorium of the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

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Netanyahu's Likud challenger surging ahead of primary launch

ARON HELLER
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's challenger for the post of ruling Likud party leader is picking up more endorsements ahead of the official launch of his primary campaign on Monday. Gideon Saar's associates expect about 1,000 party activists to attend the launch and have been buoyed by support of a half-dozen Likud lawmakers, including the powerful chairman of the party's executive body. Saar's leadership bid marks the first serious internal challenge to Netanyahu in his decade-plus in power. Though still a decided underdog to the embattled prime minister, Saar seems to be gaining traction ahead of the Dec. 26 vote among the party faithful as there is growing skepticism that Netanyahu can



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacts during the weekly cabinet meeting, at his office in Jerusalem, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

still deliver after two indecisive election results and a corruption indictment that may force him out of of-

fice. Netanyahu faces charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust in three cor-

ruption cases in which he is accused of trading legislative or regulatory favors in exchange for lavish gifts

or favorable media coverage.

He denies wrongdoing and has waged an angry campaign against the media and law enforcement officials he said are bent on ousting him from office. Outwardly, Likud members have strongly supported their leader and joined in denouncing the alleged "coup" of the liberal elites against him.

But Saar's burgeoning insurrection has begun to reveal some cracks.

Recent polls show that with Saar as leader, Likud would make a more powerful bloc with its natural ultra-Orthodox and nationalist allies.

Saar would also be in an easier position to create a national unity government with the centrist Blue and White party if, as expected, the upcoming March election produces a deadlock like the previous two rounds have. □

Turkey deploys surveillance drone in northern Cyprus

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey has dispatched a surveillance and reconnaissance drone to the breakaway north of ethnically divided island nation of Cyprus amid tensions over offshore oil and gas exploration, Turkey's state-run media said Monday. The Anadolu news agency said the Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drone took off from an airbase in Dalaman, Turkey, and touched down Monday



A Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drone is seen shortly after its landing at an airport in Gecitkala, known as Lefkoniko in Greek, in Cyprus, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

at the airport in Gecitkala — known as Lefkoniko in Greek, on Cyprus.

Kudret Ozersay, foreign minister of the self-declared Turkish Cypriot state, told reporters Sunday that the Turkish deployment would be limited to unarmed drones as there was "no need" for armed ones. Earlier, Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister Ersin Tatar said there was an "urgent need" to address the security concerns of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots in the eastern Mediterranean.

It's unclear what the drones will be specifically tasked to do.

Cyprus Defense Minister Savvas Angelides called the move an "additional factor contributing to instability" in the region, hurting efforts aimed at reunifying the country. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said last week that Ankara could use its military forces to halt gas drilling in waters off Cyprus that it claims as its own. □

Japan, South Korea hold export talks, seek dispute solution

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan and South Korea were unable to settle their sharp differences in talks Monday on Japanese restrictions on high-tech exports to South Korea but agreed to continue their dialogue, officials said.

The talks in Tokyo were the first since Japan tightened controls in July on exports to South Korea of materials used in the manufacture of smartphones, television screens and other high-tech products, citing national security concerns.

A month later, Japan also removed South Korea from a list of preferential trading partners.

The steps have contributed to a sharp escalation in tensions between the two countries and pushed their relations to the lowest level in decades.

South Korea has demanded that Japan reverse its measures, saying Tokyo is using trade controls to retaliate for recent South Korean court rulings that ordered Japanese companies to compensate



Lee Ho-hyeon, third from right, director-general for International Trade Policy at South Korea's Trade, Industry and Energy Ministry, and Yoichi Iida, fourth from left, director-general of Japan's Trade Control Department attend a director-general level meeting at the trade ministry in Tokyo Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

former Korean laborers for their treatment during Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. Tokyo has insisted that a 1965 agreement establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries settled all compensation issues.

The talks Monday between Yoichi Iida, director-general of Japan's Trade Control Department, and his South Korean counterpart, Lee Ho-hyeon, were the first at that level between the countries in more than three years.

"We made a step forward," Japanese trade

minister Hiroshi Kajiyama said of the talks, but added that more dialogue is necessary before Japan can regain confidence in South Korean export controls and is able to reverse its measures. Japan has accused South Korea of not prop-

erly guarding against the re-export of sensitive materials to third countries.

He said the two sides discussed a wide range of issues, including export controls on sensitive materials, conventional weapons and screening procedures, and "were able to promote mutual understanding."

"Taking into consideration the current international security environment, we shared the view that it is necessary to promote effective export controls within their areas of responsibility and discretion," Kajiyama said.

He said the two sides agreed to continue a dialogue on export control policies with the aim of resolving their differences, and plan to hold their next meeting in Seoul at an unspecified time in the near future.

Japan's trade curbs against South Korea led to retaliatory measures that spilled into national security, with Seoul threatening to abandon a key military intelligence sharing pact with Tokyo. □

Wife of Zimbabwe's VP is charged with attempting to kill him

By FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— The wife of Zimbabwe's vice president has been charged with attempting to kill her husband.

Marry Chiwenga, a former model and wife of Vice President Constantino Chiwenga, appeared at the Harare Magistrates Court Monday where she was also charged with money laundering and fraud.

Wearing a floral dress, she waved to journalists as she entered the court's holding cells. The magistrate ordered that she remain in custody pending a bail hearing.

She is accused of trying to kill her husband in South Africa in July.

First, she tried to deny medical treatment to Chiwenga by insisting he



In this Sunday, Aug. 26, 2018 file photo Zimbabwean Deputy President Constantino Chiwenga is seen with his wife Marry, right, upon arrival for the inauguration ceremony of President Emmerson Mnangagwa, at the National Sports Stadium in Harare.

Associated Press

stay at a hotel instead of a hospital when he was flown to South Africa for emergency medical treatment, according to the charge sheet.

While Chiwenga was in the hospital on July 8, she went to his room, asked security to leave and, while alone with him, removed an intravenous drip and a catheter, causing him to bleed profusely, according to the charge sheet.

She then forced him off the bed and tried to bring him out of the ward before being intercepted by his security detail, the charges said.

Chiwenga later went to China where he received medical treatment for four months and he returned to Zimbabwe in November. □

Convicted in massacre, Suriname's leader hangs on fight

By **HARMEN BOERBOOM**
MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN
Associated Press

PARAMARIBO, Suriname (AP) — Zahara Kamperveen laid white lilies before a glossy black plaque, then gently touched the name of her grandfather, a radio-station owner executed by a military junta in Suriname along with 14 other men nearly two decades before she was born.

"They were murdered because they fought for you and for me. For our future," the 19-year-old law student told a crowd that gathered to remember the victims.

The man responsible for the murder of André Kamperveen was President Desi Bouterse, according to a verdict delivered last month. Despite the finding that he ordered the 1982 killings known here as the December murders, Bouterse remains president and a possible candidate for a third term in elections next year in this sparsely populated former Dutch colony on the northeast edge of South America.

Bouterse, 74, says he's the victim of a politically motivated prosecution, and he retains strong support in his



In this Aug. 12, 2015 file photo, Suriname President Desire "Desi" Delano Bouterse observes a military parade, after being sworn in for his second term, in Paramaribo, Suriname.

Associated Press

National Democratic Party, along with powerful allies like China. For the relatives of the slain and other Bouterse opponents, the president's continued freedom and political power are troubling signs of tiny Suriname's inability to emerge from the era of brutal South American strongmen into the democracy that has

taken hold in most of the region.

The burly, goateed army sergeant led a 1980 coup that established military rule for more than seven years. After an attempted counter-coup and street protests supporting it, Kamperveen and other junta opponents — including prominent lawyers, trade

union leaders and journalists — were arrested and shot point-blank, in Fort Zeelandia, a 17th-century colonial fortress in the capital, Paramaribo.

Before the victims were slain, some of them, under pressure from the military, declared in a television recording that they had been preparing an inva-

sion with the help of foreign countries in order to expel the military regime. Military leaders declared that the victims were shot during an escape attempt.

After a brutal reign and 1987 transition to mostly free elections, under international pressure, Bouterse moved to the sidelines, where he started building a political party able to compete in free elections. Suriname saw a halting progress toward democracy, including freer media and a largely independent judiciary. An investigation into the December murders began in 2000. As the court slowly called witnesses and heard evidence, year after year, Bouterse not only remained free, he returned to power. In 2010 he was elected president, a position he has held since. Most Surinamers are below the age of 30 and don't remember the coup years. In a wildly diverse country of African, indigenous, Asian and European descent, Bouterse's National Democratic Party unites the country's many ethnic groups and maintains vigorous outreach to the poor, including food distribution in low-income sections of the capital. □

Police in Argentina arrest 4 in killing of British tourist



A police officer stands in front of the Faena Art Hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, hours after assailants trying to rob two British tourists shot and killed one of them and wounded the other, Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019.

Associated Press

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Police in Argentina have arrested four men suspected in the killing of a British tourist who was shot during a robbery attempt, authorities said Monday.

Authorities were searching for a fifth suspect in the murder of Briton Matthew Charles Gibbard in Buenos Aires on Saturday, according to Argentine officials.

Gibbard, 50, was shot as he and his stepson approached a luxury hotel in the Puerto Madero area of the Argentine capital. The stepson, a 28-year-old Briton, suffered a gunshot wound. The assailants were on a motorcycle and supported by accomplices in a car, and the tourists tried to resist the attack, according to an official account.

Authorities identified the vehicles used by the attackers from security camera footage and conducted more than a dozen searches in the Buenos Aires area, said Marcelo D'Alessandro, justice and security director in Buenos Aires.

Eduardo Scarzello, a senior security official, said the gang involved in Gibbard's death had operated at the city's international airport, identifying U.S., European and other tourists and following them to their destinations in order to rob them. □

LOCAL



Launching of the book 'An Aruban in Libya'

ORANJESTAD — Clyde R. Harms is the author of the recently launched book 'An Aruban in Libya' about his years with ESSO in Tripoli (1966 – 1973). During a benefit dinner concert, hosted by Azure Beach Residences, last Saturday, the book was officially launched. The book is sponsored by the Venezuelan brothers Alberto and Irwin Perret-Gentil, respectively Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Pering Group. All profits of the book sales will go to the Queen Wilhelmina Fonds (KWF), the Aruban equivalent of the American Cancer Society.

The author dedicates this edition to Bill and Thelma Murphy, friends from the time that Harms worked at the Lago Oil & Transport Co. in Aruba. At that time Bill and Thelma convinced Harms to pursue a university degree and even managed to get him a scholarship from Lago. Without this university degree Harms would not have been able

to achieve the job in Libya. Bill's son Billy came especially from Connecticut to Aruba to be present during the book launch.

The book is a memoir of Harms' years in Libya during a dramatic time in history, 1966 to 1973, tells the prologue, written by Lynn Long from Salt Lake City, Utah. Libya was a cauldron of change as Muammar Gaddafi overthrew the ruling monarch, instituted Islamic Law and began a reign of despotic dictatorship that lasted until recent time. The prologue continues: "Before Harms was deemed an "undesirable" and booted out of the country in 1973 (with many others), he lived with his family in Tripoli, exploring the region, observing and befriending people of many nationalities, learning about the culture, and having many adventures. He eloquently describes life in that city, so different from his home in Aruba, with many amusing tales of adjustments and accommodations that had to be made especially af-



ter Gaddafi took over." The book started out as a series of weekly articles that were published in Aruba Today. Long, a reader of the newspaper and visitor of Aruba, suggested Harms to compile the stories into

a book and the result is a very interesting book telling the seven years of his life in Libya.

'An Aruban in Libya' is for sale at the Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds office at Spinozstraat in Oranjes-

tad and at the local book stores. It is a beautiful souvenir of Aruba and would be a wonderful Christmas gift. Purchasing 'An Aruban in Libya' will also help Aruba fight the dreaded disease of cancer. □

32 and 35 years visiting Aruba

PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors and Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were sisters Marlene Coscione & Patricia Minor Carroll honored as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The sisters have been visiting Aruba 32

years consecutively and are only three years away in receiving the Emerald Ambassador certificate. The Emerald Ambassador certificate was presented to the lovely couple Howard & Ellen Koval, who have been visiting Aruba for 40 years consecutively. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is the highest certificate that we present, and is given to visitors who have been visiting Aruba 35 years or more consecutively. It is incredibly beautiful to see that Aruba has so many loyal visitors, and we hope to see them for many more years to come.

These wonderful people



stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety and Aruba's warm and friendly people who became like

family to them. These honorees not only fell in-love with the island, but also brought family, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors to Aruba.

Richardson together with the representatives of the

Playa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



Evil eye bean or Bonchi Hojada

Episode XLVIII (48)

ORANJESTAD — The difference between *Ormosia coccinea* (known as 'Huayruru') and *Abrus precatorius*, known in Aruba as 'Bonchi Hojada', is that *Ormosia coccinea* or huayruru is the largest seed in the graph and *Abrus precatorius* or bonchi hojada is the little one.

The Huayruru seeds are used for newborn babies and young children as amulets as a protection against bad spirits. They are put around their hands since they are unable to remove them and take them to their mouth. As soon as they begin to grow these are removed and stored in a place outside their reach. Huayruru seeds used on the body are harmless and do not cause contact poisoning or proven allergies.

Ormosia coccinea is a plant that grows throughout South Eastern North American countries, and all throughout South America. It produces beautiful red seeds with one black spot covering one-third of its surface. These seeds are used for jewelry and other decorative purposes. The seeds are poisonous if eaten.

The seeds are known as Wayruru Ay-mara also spelled huayruru, huayruru, in Peru where villagers believe them to be powerful good luck charms and nene or chumico in Costa Rica. A name also known in the French American colonies is panacoco, but this more often applies to *Swartzia tormentosa*, another plant carrying these kinds of red and black seed.

If you are concerned regarding origin, you can may take them to an ethnobiologist for verification. If you believe your seeds are *Ormosia coccinea* you have been given a

good luck charm with no ill intention, as long as you don't eat your good luck charm seeds (warn others and keep away from the kids or your pets). The research seems to suggest they are just beautiful adornments.

Aruba has its *Abrus precatorius* or Bonchi Hojada.

Abrus precatorius is a vine native to India and other tropical and subtropical areas of the world, it is a slender, perennial climber with long, pinnate-leafleted leaves that twines around trees, shrubs, and hedges. Since introduction to Florida and the Caribbean, it is now commonly found throughout these areas and in the southern United States.

It is known by a variety of names, including jequirity bean, rosary pea, and prayer bead, crab's eye, and love bean. The vine has pods with oval seeds and a hard glossy shell. The seeds vary in color, from red, black, orange or white with black and white centers). While all parts of the plant are toxic, the highest concentrations are found in the seeds. Due to their appearance, the seeds are often used for jewelry, beadwork and ornaments.

Abrus precatorius is a poisonous plant which contains one of the most lethal toxins, Abrin, a toxalbumin that inhibits protein synthesis causing cell death. The seeds are crushed and taken orally for suicidal purpose. There is no antidote for this poisoning.



2- huayruru baby bracelet



3- (Huayruru) *Ormosia coccinea*

Continued on Page 15



4- Huayruru size

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Evil eye bean or Bonchi Hojada

Episode XLVIII (48)

Continued from Page 14

If you believe your seeds are from *Abrus precatorius*, wrap them WITHOUT TOUCHING. Label them and add poisonous do not to touch or eat. Don't leave them lying around to sort another day. The Rosary pea is very aesthetically pleasing, and for this reason it is made into jewelry by various cultures. Unfortunately some jewelry makers have died by pricking their fingers during this process. Yup, the rosary pea is probably the world's most toxic seed. While intact, the seeds are mostly harmless (if I can use that word), but once the outer coating is scratched or the seed is crushed, as little as 0.1–1 µg/kg can kill a human.

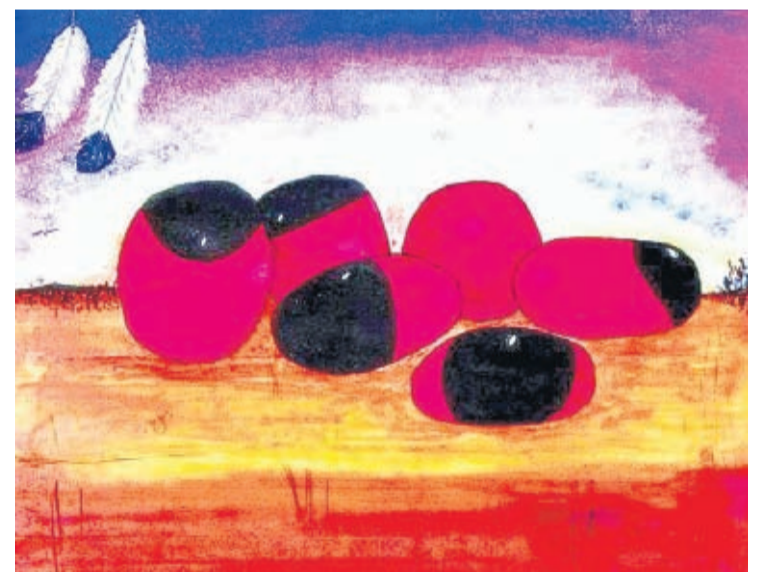
Abrus precatorius causes total bodily system shut down. For this reason, the collection needed warning labels, labelled them



5- (Bonchi Hojada) *Abrus precatorius*

with easy to see toxic warning stickers and have written a safety data sheet on how to handle them (never without gloves and avoid touching your face!) While these beans do contain a poison, it is extremely unlikely that an individual would chew through the

hard shell of the seed and ingest the Abrin. Jequirity beans are not particularly harmful in their natural state and the seeds are not expected to cause serious problems if swallowed whole and not chewed. There have been no reported cases of poisonings from



7- "Bonchi Hojada" Abstract Interpretation by Etnia Nativa

the bracelets but ingestion of any quantity of chewed, crushed or drilled (e.g. from a necklace) beans should be regarded serious and anyone who is suspected of ingesting them should seek medical advice immediately. If you think you are in possession of the jequirity bean bracelets it is recom-

mended that your return them to the supplier. If this is not possible then you should bag the bracelets and dispose of through normal household waste. In line with good hand hygiene practices, and as an additional precaution, you should also wash your hands and avoid touching your eyes after bagging. □

Market consultation as the next step in Port City Oranjestad development



ORANJESTAD — Aruba Ports Authority (APA) announces that the transformation of the former cargo terminal area near the cruise terminal of Oranjestad into a new leisure, residential and commercial area is entering a new phase. In February 2019, the Aruban government approved the urban development plan for this project, appropriately named Port City Oranjestad. APA will issue the first building lots in 2020 and is therefore inviting market participants to submit their wishes and ideas in a market consultation.

With the development

of Port City Oranjestad, APA and the Aruban government intend to bring a transformation to the area, providing an attractive combination of living and working that positively contributes to the development of the island of Aruba. Port City Oranjestad is to act as a magnet for residents and tourists alike, with a variety of mixed-use programs including boutique hotels, offices & conference facilities, supporting F&B & retail, recreation as well as residential housing. The Port City Oranjestad project plan also includes a public waterfront park between the cruise termi-

nal and Bushiri Beach. The entire area measures 20 hectares, of which 12 hectares are intended for public space and 8 hectares for commercial real estate development. The total investment is estimated at approx. 575 million US Dollars over the next 10 to 20 years, with an estimated investment of approximately 500 million US Dollars coming from private investors and developers.

APA is looking for developers and consortia that have experience in joint financing and development of similar plots, from design to completion including op-

eration. Additionally, APA wants to use this market consultation to gain insight into the end-users and operators requirements and wishes, in order to ensure that supply and demand are balanced when the formal invitation for tenders takes place. The lots of the area will be issued and developed in phases. This market consultation is focused on the most western plots, adjacent to Bushiri Beach.

Quote from APA's CEO Marc Figaroa: 'With this market consultation, we want to gain insight into the wishes and ambitions of operators, as well as

project developers. A better understanding of these wishes and ambitions allows us to support market demands. We call on project developers, hotel operators and other parties that have an interest in Port City Oranjestad to provide us with their input. The area is to be developed with a focus on sustainability and the interests of the local population, as we want to create an area that can benefit Aruba for the decades to come.'

The Port City Oranjestad urban development plan is the result of a close collaboration between APA and the Ministry of Tourism, Public Health and Sports, together with the Directorate for Infrastructure and Planning (Directie Infrastructuur en Planning, DIP), the Public Works Authority (Dienst Openbare Werken, DOW), the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA), as well as Port of Amsterdam International in an advisory capacity.

For more information about the market consultation and the underlying documents thereof, please visit: www.arubaports.com/portcityoranjestad

Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD – Aruba Today likes to welcome readers to participate in our newspaper. You can see that in our Honored Guest-publications, specials like on Valentine's Day and on other occasions. Throughout the year you are always welcome to send us your vacation picture(s) together with completing the sentence: Aruba to me is (Email: news@arubatoday.com)

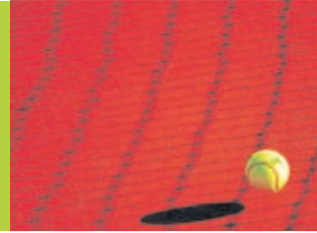
For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Natalie**. She wrote:

Aruba to me is.... Being Thankful for this annual pilgrimage and these turkeys!

We have been coming for over 20 years. Babies have grown up and moved away from us, but they always come back to Aruba with us. My mom spent her last trip to Aruba with us last November. Within 3 weeks of her trip she passed away. She loved our trips.

Aruba Today wishes you and your family Happy Holidays and hope that you will find relief in all the sweet memories your Dear Mother left behind. ☐

SPORTS



U.S. team player and captain Tiger Woods, left, shakes hands with International team player Adam Scott of Australia after the U.S. team won the President's Cup golf tournament at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019. The U.S. team won the tournament 16-14.

Associated Press

TIGER WOODS CAPS COMEBACK YEAR BY LEADING EMOTIONAL TEAM WIN

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

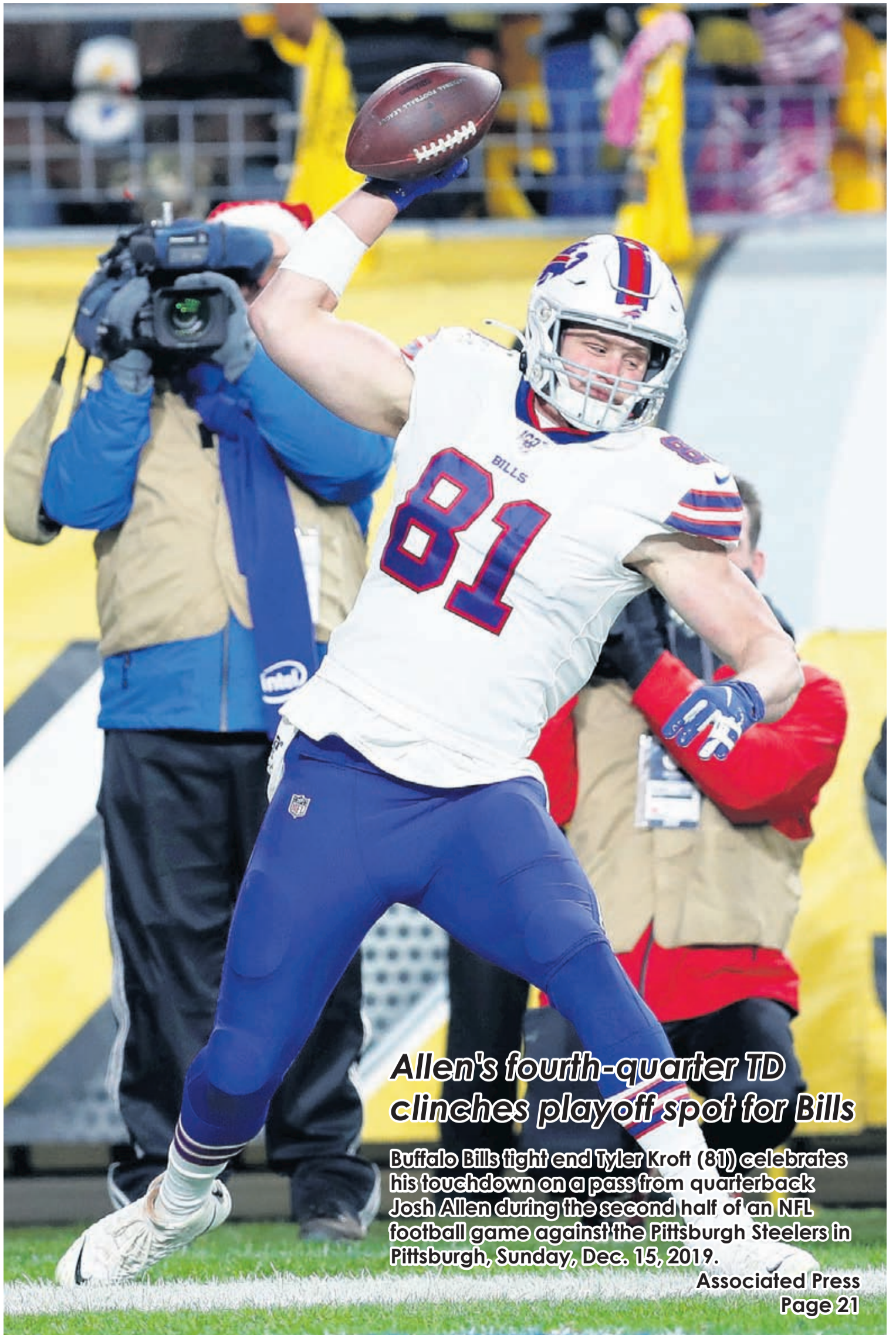
— The emotions poured out of Tiger Woods, just like they did at Augusta National in the spring, except this felt different.

The Masters was for him.

This was for 11 players — at times his teammates, always under his captaincy — who delivered another American victory in the Presidents Cup and a moment that nearly brought Woods to tears.

And when the decisive point was on the board Sunday at Royal Melbourne, Woods celebrated with everyone he could find by hugging them hard enough to take the breath out of them.

Continued on Page 23



Allen's fourth-quarter TD clinches playoff spot for Bills

Buffalo Bills tight end Tyler Krott (81) celebrates his touchdown on a pass from quarterback Josh Allen during the second half of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

Associated Press
Page 21

LeBron James, Lakers beat Hawks for 7th win in a row



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, pushes Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young out of the way as he prepares to grab a jump ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Not looking the least bit tired after a whirlwind weekend, LeBron James scored 32 points and the Los Angeles Lakers extended their winning streak to seven with a 101-96 victory over the pesky Atlanta Hawks on Sunday night.

The Lakers pulled even with Milwaukee for the NBA's best record at 24-3.

The Hawks kept it close all the way. Rookie Cam Reddish got a look at a tying 3-pointer from the corner, but the shot clanked off the rim. Danny Green went to the other end and knocked down a pair of free throws to send the Hawks to their fourth straight loss.

After scoring 28 points in a win at Miami on Friday

night, James flew to Columbus, Ohio, to watch son Bronny play a high school game Saturday night. Then, James traveled on to Atlanta to face the Hawks. James also had 13 rebounds and seven assists, the best a no-look, between-the-legs pass that caught Dwight Howard breaking down the lane for a massive dunk. Anthony Davis added 27 points and 13 rebounds.

Trae Young led the Hawks with 30 points.

MAGIC 130, PELICANS 119
NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Jonathan Isaac had 21 points and 10 rebounds and Orlando handed New Orleans its franchise-record 12th straight loss.

Orlando center Nikola Vucevic returned from a sprained ankle to score 20 points. He played 29 minutes in his first game since Nov. 20. The Magic snapped a three-game losing streak. Orlando made a season-high 17 3s, shooting 50% from long range. Jrue Holiday led the Pelicans with 29 points and eight assists.

NETS 109, 76ERS 89
NEW YORK (AP) — Spencer Dinwiddie scored 24 points, Joe Harris had 16 points and Brooklyn beat Philadelphia.

DeAndre Jordan had 13 points and 11 rebounds and Garrett Temple finished with 13 points for the Nets.

With Joel Embiid out with an upper respiratory illness, Ben Simmons scored 20 points and Tobias Harris

chipped in 17 for the 76ers. They had won five in a row.

NUGGETS 111, KNICKS 105
DENVER (AP) — Nikola Jokic made a late go-ahead 3-pointer and finished with scored 25 points to help Denver hold off New York.

Will Barton had 16 points, Gary Harris added 15 and Jamal Murray had 14, including a key 3-pointer in the late going. The Nuggets beat New York for the 12th straight time in Denver.

Marcus Morris led New York with 22 points. The Knicks were coming off back-to-back road wins under interim coach Mike Miller. They played Denver 11 days ago in New York and lost by 37 points, a setback that preceded the firing of David Fizdale as coach.

KINGS 100, WARRIORS 79
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Bogdan Bogdanovich scored 25 points, Buddy Hield added 19 and Sacramento routed Golden State.

The Kings won for the fourth time in five games and shook off a disappointing home loss Friday to the lowly New York Knicks.

They shot a season-best 60% from the field and beat the Warriors for just the fourth time in the past 25 games between the teams dating to the 2013-14 season.

Willie Cauley-Stein, facing his former team, led the Warriors with 14 points on 7-for-9 shooting. Golden State has lost eight of nine to fall to 5-23. □




Market consultation First Phase of Port City Oranjestad

Aruba Ports Authority (APA) will transform the former cargo terminal area near the cruise terminal in Oranjestad into a new leisure, residential and commercial area. This area is to act as a magnet for residents and tourists alike, with a Waterfront Park and phased development of mixed-use commercial real estate.

APA will issue the first building plots in 2020 and is therefore inviting market participants like developers and/or consortia, that have ample experience in joint financing and development to participate in this market consultation.

Market Consultation Launch by APA

It is the objective of the APA to gain insight into the requirements of the end users and operators as the APA desires to ensure that the Request for Proposal is in line with market developments and demand.

This consultation is focused on the most western part (lot OA), adjacent to Bushiri Beach, where the preferred scenario is to develop a Boutique Hotel and a varied building programme consisting of conference facilities, offices with supporting F&B facilities as well as retail space.

This market consultation also gives the opportunity for feedback on the broader provisional Urban Development Plan.

Market participants that have an interest in the Port City Oranjestad development are welcome to provide APA with their input and advice.

For more information about the Port City Oranjestad market consultation, the underlying documents and registration, please visit:

www.arubaports.com/portcityoranjestad

NBA hosts prison pickup games in social justice effort

FOLSOM, Calif. (AP) — The NBA is sending players and coaches into prisons to host pickup games with inmates as part of a new effort designed to lessen the stigmas around those behind bars.

The Sacramento Kings kicked off the first in a nationwide series of contests this week at Folsom State Prison, made famous in the Johnny Cash song. Team members and coaches first held a discussion Thursday with inmates and representatives of the Represent Justice Campaign who are themselves formerly incarcerated.

The campaign organized the Play for Justice initiative as an effort to bring hope to those in the criminal justice system who are disproportionately people of color and the poor. □

Rick Porcello, Mets finalize \$10M, 1-year contract



In this Sept. 8, 2019, file photo, Boston Red Sox's Rick Porcello pitches during the first inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees, in Boston.

Associated Press

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rick Porcello's \$10 million deal with the New York Mets shows the fruits of free agency as much as Gerrit Cole's \$324 million contract across town with the Yankees.

While Cole set a record, location was among Porcello's primary concerns.

"I live about an hour away from Citi Field," he said Monday after the Mets announced his contract. "That opportunity of having the hometown comfort, the ability for my father and family and friends to be able to come and see these games in person and be get to experience it a little bit more live, were pretty deciding factors for me." Porcello lives in Morristown, New Jersey, and was at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange when Detroit selected him with the 27th overall pick of the 2007 amateur draft. He was traded to Boston after the 2014 season and was guaranteed \$95 million by the Red Sox over the next five seasons. He won the AL Cy Young Award with a 22-4 record in 2016 and was 17-7 in 2018, when he earned a World Series ring.

"This is a big deal for me," he said. "I grew up a life-long Mets fan as a kid, and now to get the opportunity to play for the organization that I cheered on for so many years is a huge honor."

New York was the first team to contact Porcello during free agency and former

Mets pitcher Al Leiter, now a New York baseball operations adviser, helped recruit him. Porcello remembered going to a game when Mike Piazza went deep.

"Watching him in person be able to hit a home run at Shea Stadium was a huge thrill for me," Porcello recalled, adding the 2000 NL pennant and Subway Series against the Yankees was another thrill.

"Just kind of being a fan along for that ride was absolutely incredible experience," he said.

A right-hander who turns 31 on Dec. 27, Porcello joins a rotation that includes Jacob deGrom and Noah Syndergaard plus fellow New York-area natives Marcus Stroman and Steven Matz, who grew up on Long Island.

Michael Wacha, who agreed to a \$3 million deal last week, also hopes to earn a rotation spot, and Seth Lugo and Robert Gsellman also preparing for spring training as starters.

"I think we're probably the deepest starting pitching rotation in baseball," general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said last week.

Porcello was 14-12 with a 5.52 ERA in 32 starts last season. He has started throwing earlier this offseason and instituted new drills.

"There's kind of a long list of things, honestly, from the offseason leading into spring training, and then certain things that kind of happened throughout the

course this season that I think contributed to some of the struggles that I had," he said.

"I've got a pretty good grasp on what was going on, the mechanical side of things. I think that mechani-

cally when things are off, it starts to affect higher thinking on the mound, and then the mental stuff starts to go a little bit. But it was just a matter of not being in position to execute pitches," he said

Porcello has a 149-118 record and 4.36 ERA overall. Thinking back to Boston's win over Houston in the 2018 AL Championship Series, he didn't recall any questionable sign stealing attempts by the Astros. □

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2020

CELEBRATION

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Dinner: Bites and Bubbles New Year's Eve Bruch with Wine Pairing. 8:00PM - 10:00PM

& Hors d'oeuvres. 10PM - 1:00AM

Beverage: Premium Open Bar 10:00PM - 1:00AM

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Oranjestad- Renaissance Marina Downtown is home to the Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood. Herby senior and Herby Junior both share a passion and love for fishing. They know what the local waters have to offer and what fresh fish really means. Over 30 years ago, the idea for the fishing charter was born.

Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

Herby shares his experience with his crew, who take out guests daily on their tournament rigged 35ft twin engine

Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



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For reservations visit www.driftwoodaruba.com or call (297)-5832515

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Kane gets 1st hat trick of season, Blackhawks beat Wild 5-3

CHICAGO (AP) — Patrick Kane scored three goals for his first hat trick of the season, and the Chicago Blackhawks stopped a four-game slide by topping the Minnesota Wild 5-3 on Sunday night. Brandon Saad and David Kampf also scored for Chicago, which was coming off a heartbreaking loss at St. Louis. The last-place Blackhawks had dropped seven of nine overall. Robin Lehner stopped 23 shots.

Kevin Fiala scored twice for Minnesota in the opener of a three-game trip. Eric Staal also scored, and Ryan Suter had three assists. Kaapo Kahkonen finished with 22 saves.

KINGS 4, RED WINGS 2

DETROIT (AP) — Anze Kopitar scored two goals and Los Angeles beat Detroit for its third win in four games.

Jeff Carter and Tyler Tofoli also scored for the

Kings. Alex Iafallo had two assists and Jack Campbell, who is from Port Huron, Mich., stopped 22 shots.

Defenseman Madison Bowey had a goal and an assist, and Filip Zadina also scored for Detroit. Eric Comrie finished with 28 saves.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 6, CANUCKS 3

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Max Pacioretty had two goals and two assists to help Vegas beat Vancouver.

Nick Holden, Valentin Zykov, Jonathan Marchessault and Mark Stone also scored for the Golden Knights. It was the fifth time this season Vegas had five different goal scorers in a game.

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 26 shots to improve to 12-2-1 in his career against the Canucks.

Elias Pettersson, Brock Boeser and Jake Virtanen scored for the Canucks. Jacob Markstrom made 34



Chicago Blackhawks' Patrick Kane (88) celebrates with teammate Jonathan Toews (19) after scoring a hat trick during the third period of an NHL hockey game against the Minnesota Wild, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019, in Chicago.

Associated Press

saves to fall to 1-6-1 in his career against the Golden Knights. Michael DePietro replaced Markstrom late in the third period, allowed one goal on seven shots.

JETS 7, FLYERS 3

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Blake Wheeler and Mark Scheifele each had a power-play goal and added two assists in Winnipeg's

win over Philadelphia.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Luca Sbisa, Logan Shaw, Patrik Laine and Kyle Connor also scored and Connor Hellebuyck made 29 saves to help the Jets improve to 20-11-2.

Matt Niskanen, James van Riemsdyk and Shayne Gostisbehere scored for Philadelphia. Brian Elliott allowed six goals on 17 shots in the first two periods, and Carter Hart made six stops in relief in the third.

The Jets scored twice on a five-minute power play midway through the second period after Philadelphia left wing Joel Farabee crashed into Mathieu Perreault long after the forward gave up the puck.

Perreault stayed down on the ice for quite some time, then had to be helped off and went straight to the dressing room. He did not return. □

Texans grab AFC South lead with 24-21 victory over Titans

By The Associated Press
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)

— The Houston Texans grabbed control of the AFC South by beating the Tennessee Titans 24-21 Sunday.

The defending division champs are looking for Houston's fourth AFC South title in six years under coach Bill O'Brien. The Titans haven't won this division since 2008, and Mike Vrabel is Tennessee's third coach since then.

Ka'imi Fairbairn kicked a 29-yard field goal with 3:26 left for the winning points.

The Texans (9-5) nearly blew a 14-0 halftime lead. Deshaun Watson threw for 243 yards and two touchdowns, but Tennessee also intercepted him twice inside the Titans 1.

The Titans (8-6) snapped a four-game win streak with only their second loss in seven games. Now they will need help in the final two games to earn their second playoff berth in three seasons.

When the Titans tied it at 14 early in the fourth quarter, the Texans scored 10 straight points. Carlos Hyde ran for a 10-yard TD, then Fairbairn's field goal finished Houston's scoring.

Ryan Tannehill hit Dion Lewis with an 11-yard TD pass with 2:04 left to pull Tennessee within 24-21. But the Titans used backup kicker Ryan Santoso on the on-side kick, and the ball only went 7 yards before being smothered by Texans safety Justin Reid.

BILLS 17, STEELERS 10

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Josh Allen threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kroft with 7:55 to play and Buffalo clinched a playoff spot, beating Pittsburgh.

The Bills secured their second playoff berth in three seasons under coach Sean McDermott. Buffalo trailed 10-7, but scored on two possessions in the fourth quarter, as Allen rallied the Bills for a comeback win for the fifth time this season. Consecutive interceptions by Jordan Poyer and Levi Wallace on Pittsburgh's last two possessions sealed the victory.

The surging Steelers had an opportunity to leapfrog the Bills for the top AFC wild card spot, but Buffalo snapped Pittsburgh's three-game win streak.

Buffalo won for the fourth time in five games and recorded its first 10-win season since 1999. The Bills also beat the Steelers for the second time ever in Pittsburgh.

Allen completed 13 of 25 passes for 139 yards with a touchdown and an interception. Allen, who also rushed for a score, has only lost consecutive games once in his career. Kroft scored his first touchdown since 2017 when he played for Cincinnati. Devin Singletary rushed for 87 yards and John Brown caught seven passes for 99 yards. He became Buffalo's first 1,000-yard receiver since 2015.

Devlin Hodges completed 23 of 38 passes for 202 yards with one touchdown and four interceptions.

PACKERS 21, BEARS 13

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Aaron Jones ran for two scores, Davante Adams caught another in the 200th edition of the NFL's oldest rivalry.

With the win, the Packers (11-3) clinched a playoff spot and swept the regular-season series between the teams for the 15th time in the last 26 seasons and the seventh time in the last 11 seasons. Green Bay defeated Chicago 10-3 in the season opener.

Green Bay now leads the all-time series 99-95-6. The Bears (7-7) saw their three-game win streak end.

The Packers improved to 19-5 against their NFC North rival with Rodgers as the starting quarterback. Rodgers completed just 16 of 33 passes for a pedestrian 203 yards but did enough to secure the victory. The two-time MVP entered the day with a 103.2 career passer rating against the Bears, the highest in league history of quarterbacks with at least 250 passes against Chicago. He had a 78.2 rating on Sunday.

Mitchell Trubisky completed his first five pass attempts for the Bears but for

only 18 yards. Chicago's offense opened the game with three straight punts and a turnover on downs. Trubisky finished 28 of 53 for 321 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions.

PATRIOTS 34, BENGALS 13

CINCINNATI (AP) — Tom Brady threw a pair of touchdown passes to move within one of the NFL career record, Stephon Gilmore returned one of his two interceptions 64 yards for a score, and the Patriots clinched a playoff berth.

A week that started with intrigue — a Patriots crew

Gilmore picked off Andy Dalton twice in the third quarter, with his second pick-6 of the season putting New England in control. The Patriots pushed their league-leading interception total to 25. The Bengals (1-13) got a touchdown pass from Dalton that ended a streak of 20 straight games without reaching the end zone on their opening drive. All they managed the rest of the way was a pair of field goals.

CHIEFS 23, BRONCOS 3

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Patrick Mahomes threw for

weather or the suddenly stout Chiefs defense, the Broncos were so inept offensively that Kelce had more yards receiving at the start of the fourth quarter than they had total offense (139 yards).

Phillip Lindsay was bottled up on the ground, and former Missouri standout Drew Lock — who grew up in the Kansas City suburb of Lee's Summit, Missouri — spent most of the day seeing red jerseys bearing down on him. The rookie quarterback was 18 of 40 for 208 yards and an egregious interception in the end zone.

COWBOYS 44, RAMS 21

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)

— Dak Prescott threw two touchdown passes and Ezekiel Elliott ran for two scores.

The Cowboys (7-7) ended their second three-game losing streak of the season, and the defending NFC East champions stayed even with Philadelphia atop the division with a showdown looming next week.

The defending NFC champion Rams (8-6), who already needed help to get into the playoffs, didn't help themselves with another poor showing a week after their most impressive game of the season in a win over Seattle. Their loss clinched playoff berths for Seattle, San Francisco and Green Bay.

After rushing for a franchise playoff-record 273 yards in a 30-22 divisional win over the Cowboys last January, the Rams were held to 22 while Dallas churned out a season-high 263. Todd Gurley had 11 carries for 20 yards.

Coming off two of his better games of the season, Rams quarterback Jared Goff had a rough outing that looked better because of his fourth-quarter numbers with the outcome decided. He finished 33 of 51 for 284 yards with two touchdowns and an interception.

The Cowboys' No. 1-ranked offense kept rolling with a season high in points to go with 475 yards, including scoring drives of 90 and 97 yards. □



Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott (21) scores a touchdown in the first half of an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Rams in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

videotaping the Bengals' sideline in Cleveland — concluded with more New England history. The Patriots have made the playoffs 11 consecutive seasons, extending their NFL record.

Brady had touchdown passes of 23 and 7 yards that left him with 538 for his career, one shy of Peyton Manning's record.

The Patriots (11-3) haven't been as overwhelming in this playoff push, getting just enough out of the 42-year-old Brady and more than enough out of the league's top-ranked defense.

Thousands of Patriots fans filled the stadium and chanted Brady's name as the minutes ran off. Brady was 15 of 29 for 128 yards and a pair of sacks.

The Patriots broke a two-game losing streak with four interceptions in the second half.

340 yards and two touchdowns, and Tyreek Hill and Travis Kelce were on the receiving end of many of his biggest throws, as the AFC West champions romped to remain in the hunt for the No. 2 playoff seed and a potential first-round bye. Like a bunch of kids getting a snow day from school, the Chiefs enjoyed every minute of it.

Hill caught five passes for 67 yards and both scores, and Kelce hauled in 11 catches for 142 yards to become the first tight end in NFL history with four consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons, helping the Chiefs (10-4) beat the Broncos for the ninth straight time. Denver (5-9) hasn't won in Kansas City since Sept. 17, 2015.

The Chiefs outscored their longtime division rival 53-9 this season.

Whether it was the snowy



In this Dec. 15, 2019 photo Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Josh Gordon (10) sets up against the Carolina Panthers during the second half of an NFL football game in Charlotte, N.C.

Associated Press

NFL suspends Seahawks WR Josh Gordon indefinitely

By **TIM BOOTH**
AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Wash. (AP) — The troubles that have followed Josh Gordon throughout his career continued Monday as the Seahawks wide receiver was suspended indefinitely by the NFL for violating league policies on performance enhancers and substances of abuse. Gordon was reinstated by the NFL in August after having been suspended indefinitely in December 2018, missing the final three games of last season for violations of the league's substance abuse policy.

"My heart goes out to Josh having to face this again. The fact that he is up against it and all, it poses a great challenge to him," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said.

"Fortunately he'll have the great benefit of all of the league's resources to support him and help him and we'll wish him the very best in taking care of business. It's really unfortunate."

Gordon signed with New England and was among the leading receivers for the Patriots with 20 catches for 287 yards and a touchdown through six games. But he was placed on injured reserve with knee and ankle injuries and was released in late October. Seattle stepped in and claimed the oft-troubled

receiver off waivers. His first game came in Week 10 against San Francisco when Gordon made a pair of key catches late in Seattle's 27-24 overtime win. Gordon had seven receptions over five games with the Seahawks. All seven seemed to have significance, including his 58-yard catch in Sunday's win over Carolina.

"He had impact to some extent it seemed like in every game," Carroll said. "This isn't about that. This is about Josh getting well and taking care of business."

Gordon's brief stint with Seattle likely finished with 11 targets, 139 yards receiving and one incomplete pass attempt on a trick play against the Panthers. Carroll was unclear of when the positive tests happened and said learning of Gordon's suspension was a surprise.

"We saw Josh really at a really high level the whole time he was here. The work ethic he brought was one, but his getting along with people and being good to work with and to talk to and deal with on a regular basis he was great," Carroll said. "We were not aware that there was anything to be concerned about, other than the history, which we knew about."

Gordon spoke last week

with reverence about being given another chance by Seattle and the culture he stepped into with the Seahawks. He said it was a "great transition," from his release in New England to being quickly added into the fold by the Seahawks.

"I think I'm fortunate in general to have landed in a place like this with coaches like this," Gordon said. "The coaching staff, the organization from the top down, the guys, it's real family-like. It's real close, real tight-knit, real energetic group and real competitive. They love the game of football. You can see it and it's a great feeling to come back to football and enjoy what you do and then be able to have fun with it."

A 2012 second-round draft pick by the Cleveland Browns, Gordon was also suspended for the first two games of the 2013 season for a substance abuse policy violation but still caught 87 passes for nine touchdowns and a league-leading 1,646 yards and was voted to the All-Pro team. He has been in and out of the league since, was released by New England earlier this season and signed with Seattle in November.

This is the eighth time in his career Gordon has been suspended by the league or by his team. □



In this Dec. 2, 2019 file photo New Jersey Devils forward Taylor Hall (9) looks on during the third period of an NHL hockey game against the Buffalo Sabres in Buffalo, N.Y.

Associated Press

Coyotes acquire Taylor Hall from Devils for picks, prospects

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

The Arizona Coyotes are looking to end their lengthy playoff drought by adding a player desperate to get back to the postseason himself.

Arizona acquired standout winger Taylor Hall from the New Jersey Devils on Monday for three prospects and two draft picks. The Coyotes will try to end their seven-year playoff drought by adding the 2018 NHL MVP who has made the postseason just once in his first nine seasons. Hall goes to the Coyotes along with Blake Speer in exchange for forward prospects Nick Merkley and Nate Schnarr, defensive prospect Kevin Bahl, a 2020 first-round pick and a conditional third-round pick in 2021. The third-rounder becomes a second-rounder if the Coyotes win a playoff round or Hall re-signs and elevates to a first if both those things happen. The first-round pick is top-three protected.

Hall, 28, has six goals and 19 assists in 30 games this season. He put up 93 points in 76 games during his MVP season. "Taylor Hall is one of the elite talents in the game today: a Hart Trophy winner, a high-end playmaker and one of the NHL's most talented forwards," Coyotes general manager John Chayka said. "We are beyond thrilled to add Taylor to our team as we continue in our mission of bringing a Stanley Cup home to Arizona." During nine-plus seasons with the Edmonton Oilers and Devils, Hall has 132 goals and 196 assists in 381 regular-season games. He has played in just five playoff games in that time.

New Jersey was looking to re-sign Hall to a long-term contract but has struggled this season. Despite trading for P.K. Subban, signing Wayne Simmonds and selecting Jack Hughes first overall, the Devils are last in the Metropolitan Division.

The Coyotes haven't made the playoffs since 2012. They currently lead the Pacific Division thanks to balanced scoring and strong goaltending.

The Devils acquired Hall in a one-for-one trade in 2016, sending defenseman Adam Larsson to Edmonton. They got a playoff appearance out of it in 2018 and flipped him into an attractive package to supplement their future.

The 19-year-old Bahl is a 6-foot-7 defenseman who is playing with Ottawa (OHL). He has five goals and 15 assists and is a plus 20 in 28 games with the 67's. The British Columbia native was Arizona's second-round pick in the 2018 draft. □



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Tiger Woods

Continued from Page 17

"Any time you have moments where you're able to do something that is bigger than us as an individual, it's so much more meaningful and so much more special," he said.

The Americans felt the same way.

Trailing for the first time in 16 years, they followed his lead. Woods, the first playing captain in 25 years, went out in the first of 12 singles matches and outlasted Abraham Ancer to set the Presidents Cup record by winning his 27th match. It also set the tone for his team.

Patrick Reed, winless in three matches and heckled so badly for his rules violation last week in the Bahamas that his caddie shoved a spectator and was kept from working the final day, was 6 up through seven holes.

Dustin Johnson, playing for the first time since the Tour Championship because of knee surgery, was 4 up through seven holes.

Perhaps most inspiring was Tony Finau in the second match. He was 4 down to Hideki Matsuyama through 10 holes when Finau won the next four and earned a half-point that put even more pressure on the International team.

Matt Kuchar delivered the winning point without even winning his match. His 5-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole assured the Americans the half-point they needed to win for the eighth straight time.

The last two matches ended in halves for a 16-14 score. The Americans tied a Presidents Cup record with an 8-4 margin in singles, the largest since the first event in 1994.

"It was really cool being part of this team and having

Tiger as captain," Kuchar said. "We had a roomful of some of the greatest golfers in the world, and when he speaks, we listen. I think all of us will look back and have these pictures hanging on our walls and say, 'We played for and alongside Tiger Woods, the greatest player ever.' It was awesome."

It was crushing for the Internationals, hoping to end two decades without a victory.

Ernie Els, who has finished second to Woods more times than anyone in golf, assembled the youngest International team ever and inspired them with equal doses of purpose and analytics. It had the lead going into Sunday for the first time since 2003, the tie in South Africa.

It just didn't have enough to cross the line.

"I followed a plan, and it didn't quite work out, but we came damn close," Els said. "If you compare our team on paper with other teams in other sport, you would have laughed us out of the building. But we gave it a hell of a go and we came mightily close to winning and upsetting one of the greatest golf teams of all time."

That team included the greatest player of his generation. Woods was appointed captain in March 2018 and suggested he might be a playing captain, which he later said was a joke.

And then he won the Masters, his 15th major and first in 11 years, to cap off a comeback from injury made even more meaningful by the hugs he shared with family and those who never left his side.

Two weeks before he filled out his team with four captain's picks, Woods won in Japan for his 82nd career



U.S. team player and captain Tiger Woods holds up the trophy after the U.S. team won the President's Cup golf tournament at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

victory, leaving him no choice but to be the first captain to pick himself.

He was the only player to go undefeated at Royal Melbourne, winning twice with Justin Thomas and on his own ball against Ancer, one of seven rookies for the Internationals.

"We were very inspired to play for Tiger — with Tiger — and it's so satisfying to win this cup because of that," Finau said.

Emotions were raw on the golf course as the Americans celebrated their first comeback since the four-point deficit at Brookline in the 1999 Ryder Cup.

In his TV interview, Woods was fighting back tears, yet another indication to his players how much it meant. "I love seeing other people cry, especially Tiger Woods," said Steve Stricker, one of three vice captains who al-

lowed Woods to hold dual roles at Royal Melbourne. And then Stricker had to hold back tears of his own. The International team at least kept it close, unlike two years ago at Liberty National when it was one putt away from being eliminated on Saturday. Even with so much American red on the scoreboards, the Internationals still had a chance in the final hour.

Matsuyama lost a 1-up lead with a three-putt from 25 feet that led to the halve with Finau. Adam Hadwin had a 15-foot birdie putt to beat Bryson DeChambeau on the 18th hole, but had to settle for a halve when he missed on the high side. Louis Oosthuizen lost a 3-up lead at the turn against Kuchar, who caught up on the 15th hole and set off the celebration two holes

later. Their matched ended in a halve.

At the closing ceremony, the Internationals stood with their arms crossed. The frustration was evident, even among the seven rookies.

The Americans now lead the series 11-1-1, the only International victory coming at Royal Melbourne in 1998. "I'm disappointed.

That's all I can say," said Adam Scott, who has played nine straight Presidents Cups without winning.

"But I like what's happening in the future. I can't wait for another crack at it."

The Internationals likely will want Els to return as captain. As for Woods?

"We are going to have those conversations in the future, but not right now," Woods said. "We are going to enjoy this one." □

Smart holiday shopping: Avoiding fake reviews and tricky ads

By **JOSEPH PISANI** and **AN-ICK JESDANUN**
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — There are lots of bargains online during the holidays, but also plenty of ways to get scammed, even at established outlets like Amazon. How can you be sure you're reading a legitimate review, not one coming from a company employee? How can you flag sponsored placements and other ads — and protect your credit card once you buy?

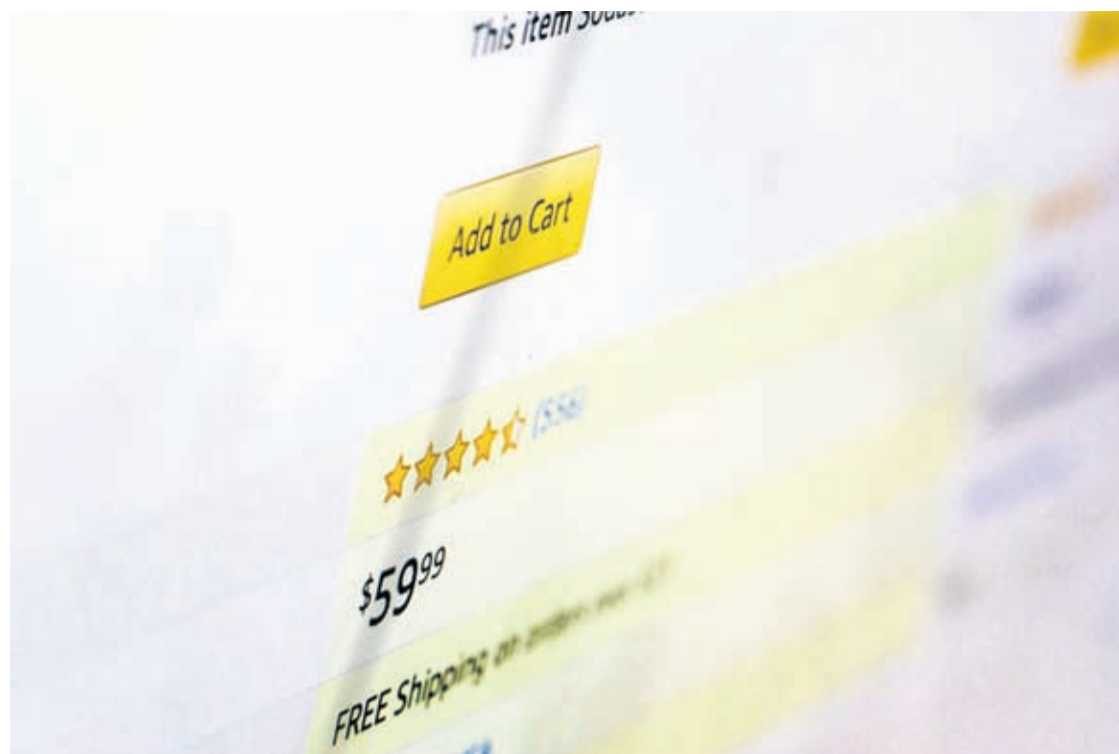
Although there's no magical solution, try some of these practices to be a savvy online shopper.

REVIEWING THE REVIEWS

Online reviews at major retailers such as Amazon and Walmart and listing services such as Yelp look like a good place to get first-hand information from people who've tried a product or merchant. But investigations by The Washington Post and BuzzFeed have described networks of fake reviewers paid to inflate ratings for lesser-known sellers on Amazon.

Merchants might also have their own employees write favorable reviews, or trash competitors.

Amazon has waged a legal battle against fake reviewers since at least 2015, when it claimed in a court filing that "an unhealthy ecosystem is developing outside of Amazon to sup-



A customer rating for a product for sale on Amazon.com is displayed on a computer screen on Monday, Dec. 16, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

ply inauthentic reviews." The Federal Trade Commission recently settled with a cosmetics merchant that, it charged, had its own managers create fake accounts and direct employees to write good reviews on Sephora.com. Beyond that, many so-called social media influencers also write reviews after receiving free products. Saoud Khalifah, who founded the service Fakespot to help consumers avoid being influenced by fake and biased reviews, suggests looking beyond text reviews.

Search for video reviews on YouTube; you can at

least tell that the reviewer has used the product, though it's not always easy to tell if they've been compensated.

Text reviews can still be helpful once you learn to spot unusual patterns, such as lots of five-star ratings in a short period of time.

If a service lets people rate reviews as helpful or not, look for reviews with an unusually high number of "helpful" votes. Khalifah said merchants might try to game the system by artificially inflating favorable reviews as helpful so they show up more prominently. Another warning sign: reviews that carry high or low ratings without offering many specifics.

Other patterns are harder to spot. A reviewer might have been banned from one service, but still write for others. Websites and apps such as Fakespot can help by flagging the same person's reviews elsewhere and offering a revised rating.

DODGE FAKES

Just because you're shopping on Amazon doesn't mean you're buying from Amazon. The online shopping giant, like eBay, Walmart and others, has vast third-party marketplaces where anyone can sell goods.

The problem: That's where

fraudsters try to sneak in their brand-name counterfeits.

In a report last year, the U.S. Government Accountability Office said 20 of the 47 items it bought from online stores with third-party marketplaces were counterfeit. It isn't just about getting duped; phony products might be made with toxic chemicals or carry other risks.

One safeguard is to research whom you're buying from.

The "sold by" section will list the seller's name. Look up its website to see if there are negative reviews or if the site looks unprofessional. Blurry photos and misspellings are red flags. Others include sparse reviews or complaints about knockoffs.

Be sure to compare the price to other sites. If it's much lower, you may be looking at a phony.

COUPONS WITHOUT THE HUNT

Save money by installing browser extensions from such companies as Honey, RetailMeNot and Wikibuy. A button will show up on your web browser. Click to automatically search for and paste in discount codes such as "CYBERDEAL" when you're ready to check out.

The companies have other

money-saving tools. Honey, for example, lets you track products and will notify you when there's a price drop at Amazon, Macy's and other major stores.

Your options are more limited on your phone. Browser extensions work only on traditional desktop and laptop computers.

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

Amazon, eBay, Walmart and Macy's are among the retailers that are stuffing their online stores with ads to make more money. Companies big and small can bid to get their products near the top of a store's search results. They look just like regular product listings, except for the word "Sponsored." You might think that a product is showing up at the top because it's somehow better.

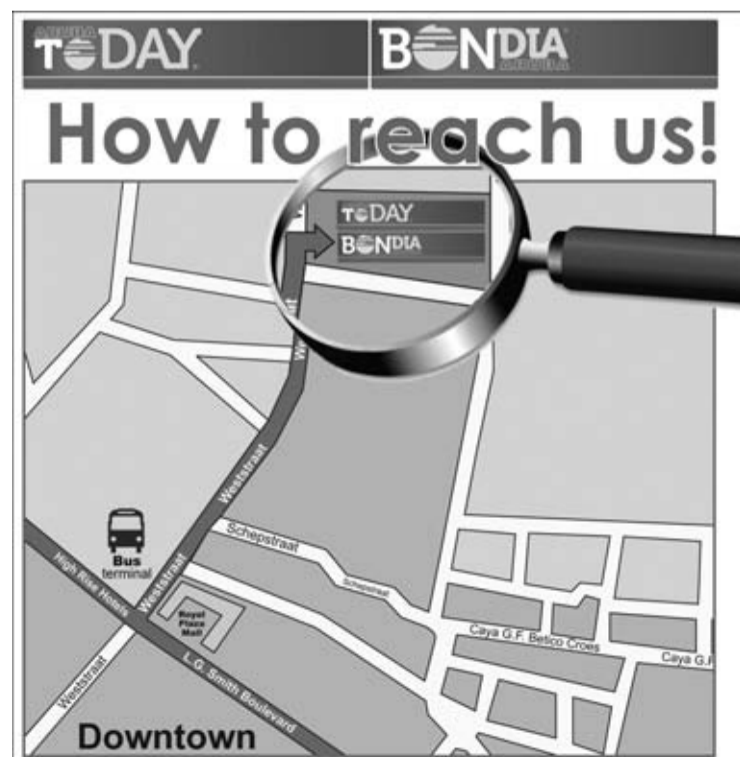
Instead, sellers typically buy ads for their more expensive products or ones they have just launched to get the product in front of more shoppers and increase the likelihood of a sale, said Juozas Kazianka, the founder of Marketplace Pulse, a market research firm.

Before buying a product that was an ad, make sure that it fits what you're looking for and that there isn't a cheaper option.

CREDIT CARD SAFETY

Once you're ready to buy, don't hand your credit or debit card number to just anyone. Even if the merchant is legitimate, smaller businesses might not have the resources to keep up on security. That could leave your data exposed to hacking.

You can protect yourself by using credit cards when possible, as they offer better protections than debit cards. Federal law limits liability to \$50 if your number gets stolen — and banks will often waive that entirely. Though there has been a decline in fraud involving existing credit card accounts, it still amounted to \$6.5 billion last year, according to estimates from the advisory firm Javelin Strategy & Research. □





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Stocks rise on Wall Street as rally stretches to fourth day

By **STAN CHOE**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rallied in morning trading on Monday, rising with European and several Asian markets after China reported surprisingly strong signs of life.

Growth in factory activity and retail sales in the world's second-largest economy both beat analysts' expectations for last month. That layered on top of optimism from last week's long-awaited "Phase 1" trade deal between China and the United States, which removed some of the uncertainty that's hung over businesses and investors.

The interim trade deal is one of a "trifecta of positive catalysts" that swept through the market last week and could help support it through the end of the year, Morgan Stanley strategists wrote in a research note. The others are a Federal Reserve that appears committed to keeping interest rates low and the potential for an orderly exit by the United Kingdom from the European Union following last week's U.K. elections.

Monday's rally was broad, with roughly 80 % of the stocks in the S&P 500 rising. Energy stocks were at the head of the pack after the price of oil added to its gain last week. Financial stocks were also strong on expectations that a health-



In this Friday, Dec. 13, 2019, file photo trader Robert Charmak works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

ier economy and higher interest rates will boost their profits.

KEEPING SCORE: The S&P 500 was up 0.8% as of 11:05 a.m. Eastern time. It's on pace for its fourth straight gain.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 182 points, or 0.6%, to 28,317, and the Nasdaq composite was up 1 %.

CHINA STRENGTH: China's industrial production rose 6.2% from a year earlier, up from the previous month's 4.7%. Retail sales growth rose to a five-month high of 8% from October's 7.2%. The interim "Phase 1" trade agreement announced Friday was relatively mod-

est but in line with the investors' expectations. The world's two largest economies averted tariff hikes planned for Sunday on imports from both sides, and the impact on economic growth will be limited, according to Citigroup economists.

"With some trade uncertainty removed last week, investors should start feeling more confident that China will be able to keep their economy growing at 6% or better in 2020," said Edward Moya, economist with Oanda.

YIELD EFFECT: Treasury yields rallied. The 10-year yield rose to 1.86% from 1.82% late Friday.

Higher rates can mean bigger profits for banks making loans and more interest income for insurers, brokerages and other financial companies. Bank of America rose 1.8%, Wells Fargo gained 1.3% and JPMorgan Chase added 1.4%. Financial stocks in the S&P 500 overall gained 1 %.

Stocks that pay big dividends, meanwhile, were lagging the market because higher interest payments for bonds and other investments can lure away some income-seeking investors. Real-estate investment trusts slipped 0.5 %, the only sector among the 11 that make up the S&P

500 to fall. Utility stocks, which are also big dividend payers, were close to flat.

TOP RETURNS: Energy stocks were the market's best performers, rising 1.6%, after the price of oil added a bit to its gain last week. Natural gas prices jumped. Oil and gas producer EOG Resources climbed 3%, while Exxon Mobil added 1.4 %.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose 17 cents to \$60.24 per barrel and is close to its highest level since May. Brent crude, the international standard, added 35 cents to \$65.57 per barrel, and natural gas jumped 7 cents, or 3.2%, to \$2.37 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Technology stocks were also strong.

Micron Technology jumped 5.1% and Broadcom rose 2.8 %. Tech stocks have swung often in recent months with every hint of progress on the U.S.-China trade war because of how much business the companies do in China.

SCENT OF A DEAL: International Flavors and Fragrances fell 7.6% for the biggest loss in the S&P 500 after after it said it's merging with DuPont's Nutrition and Biosciences unit in a \$26.2 billion deal.

The deal announced Sunday would give DuPont shareholders 55.4% of the new company's shares, while IFF shareholders will get 44.6%. □

Mutts



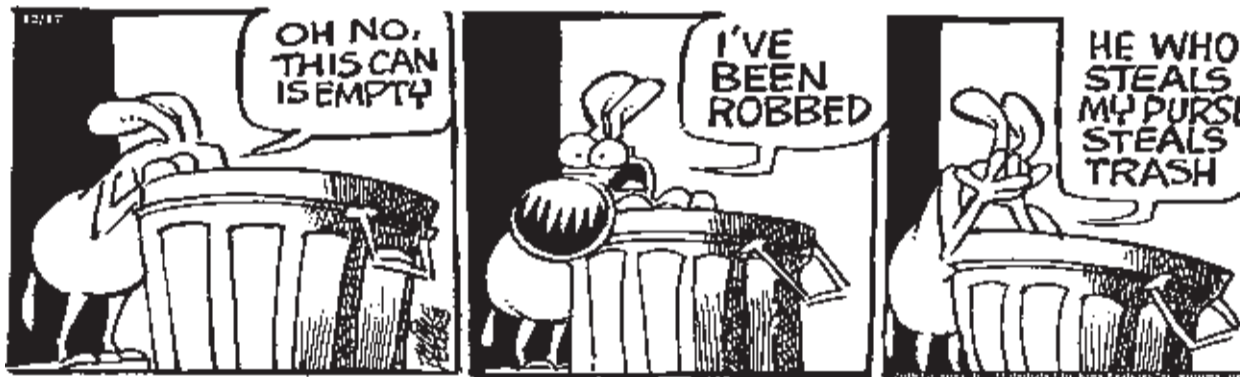
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

1	8		9	7	5			
			1	6			4	
5	1	2		4	9			
	3					1		
		2	3		5	7	6	
4			6		2			5
			8					
	2		9			1		

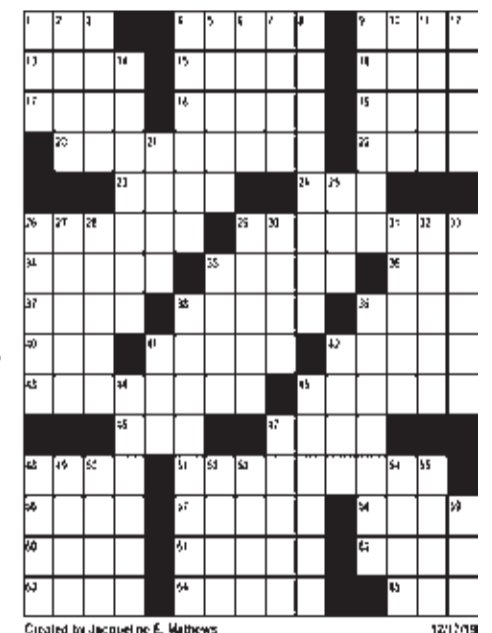
Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	2	3	8	7	6	9	4	5
9	8	7	3	5	4	6	1	2
6	4	5	1	9	2	8	7	3
8	7	9	5	6	3	1	2	4
2	1	6	4	8	7	3	5	9
5	3	4	2	1	9	7	8	6
4	9	2	7	3	8	5	6	1
3	5	8	6	4	1	2	9	7
7	6	1	9	2	5	4	3	8

- ACROSS**
- Big heart
 - Has none of it
 - angle, sloping
 - Carded
 - Sweet side dish
 - Sports venue
 - All You Need Is Beatles hit
 - Long heroic story
 - Printer cartilage contents
 - Clark Kent's love
 - Objected
 - Cutlass or A end
 - Car's river
 - Doctor's note
 - TV's Ned and
 - Go! course hazard
 - Refers to
 - Tear to bits
 - Not long recently
 - Painting, dancing, etc.
 - Con artist's ruses
 - Tire for old Russian rulers
 - Luau ring
 - Sinners
 - Liquor
 - Intensity heighten
 - Raised asks
 - High school building
 - Alcove
 - Vast
 - Drunk enthusiastic
 - Steel's main component
 - Overdo the role
 - Way out
 - Period before Easter
 - Passenger
 - Run fast
 - Breakfast order
 - Varkel
 - Cry River



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

12/17/19

DOWN

- Affirmative vote
- Cartoonist: A
- Kuwait ruler
- Recently
- Ascended
- Penny
- Part of the leg
- Tiny canned fishes
- Total lu-down
- Wrench or saw
- Eager
- Loch monster
- Wax candle holders
- Even scores
- Peculiar
- C'mon
- Michelin products
- Game
- In good luck
- Strong forces physically
- Shaver's need
- Staring over; studied intently

Monday's Puzzle Solved

VAL	SPRAY	TAFT
MINI	WAIVE	RULE
BATS	INDISPOSED	
ALI	SPEED	LUTES
CAKES	CUP	
ALIBIS	DECEIT	
ROPES	CHALK	MRS
TWAS	SHELL	SPOT
SET	SHONE	STEVE
RECUP	SHARER	
HUN	OPERA	
APRON	SQUAD	TOE
BLOODHOUND	VIVA	
LETS	ALICE	OVER
EASY	MOPES	WEN

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12/17/19

- Begone
- Jars
- Roten wind
- Devil
- Aphasia
- Representatives
- Venerate
- British measure
- Stack
- The Beaver
- Star's abbr
- Drawn-out
- Leave out
- Common
- Reason to study
- Yahzee cubes
- Afternoon social

Classifieds

Halley Time Travel

MarriottOceanClub

For rent 2020.

1-Br Oceanview \$3K each
from:03/22/20-03/29/20(3)
:03/20/20-03/27/20(2)
; 02/21/20-02/28/20(4)

MarriottSurfClub Forsale

Platinumseason
2-BR OceanView \$15,5K
2-BR OceanSide \$16,5K
2-BR OceanFront \$26K
3-BR OceanView \$28K

MarriottSurfClub

PlatinumPlus
WK51 OceanView \$39K
WK52 OceanView \$49K
WK51&52 OceanFront
\$160K:bothweeks

MarriottOceanClub

PlatinumSeason
1-BR OceanView \$9K
2-BR OceanView \$16,5K
2-BR OceanFront \$26K
GoldSeason
1-BR OceanView \$4K
2-BR OceanView \$9K

ArubaDiviPhoenix

2-BRPH WK49 &50
building7/ 7thfloor
32weeks on each \$24K each
2-BRPH WK #1
building6 / 7 thfloor
28weeks \$30K

ArubaDiviPhoenix

2 BR WK 50
building6/3rdfloor
33weeks \$22K
1-BR/WK#2
building8/groundfloor
32weeksremain \$16K

DiviLinksGolf

1-BR WK51 \$12,5K
Birdie 1 with 26 weeks
2BR WK51 \$24K
Birdie 1 with 26 weeks
1-BR WK#1& 2
Birdie 9 with 30 weeksremaining
on each \$10K each
Studio WK#2 \$7,5K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks
1-BR WK#3 \$9K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks

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DiviLinksGolf

2 BR/WK# 3 \$22K
Eagle 8 with 25 weeks
DiviVillage
studio/wk#1 \$7K
buildingC with 34 weeks

DutchVillage:

studio wk#52 \$7500
17weeks 9 accelerated
DiviLinksGolf
\$7,500
Studio wk#1 building4
24-weeks 8-accelerated

DiviLinksGolf

1-BR WK#4 \$8K
birdie-1 with 20 weeks
studio/wk#5 \$8,000
birdie-4 with 28weeks
EagleResorts
3-BR wk#51 \$25K
1-BR wk#51&52 \$25K
bothweeks

DiviVillage

5th-floor building-C
25weeks remain on each
1-BR wk#1 \$8,500
Studio/wk#1 \$7,500

La CabanaBeachResort

Thursday check-in 4thfloor
studio wk#52/1 \$7,5K each
1-BR wk#52/1 \$8,5K each
1-BR wk#52 \$8,5K

Renaissancesuites

1-BR wk#49750 \$6,5K each
3rdfloor pool/ocean view
1-BR wk#51 \$9K
5thfloor/harborview

CostaLinda

2-BR wk#51/52 \$120K both
3rd floor pool/ocean view

House Forsale

TierraDelSolGolf
3-BR , 2-Bath \$520 K
Ponton upscale houses close
to town
10min drive from major beaches
4 BR , 2 bath , Pool, \$370 K

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3-BR, 2-Bath , \$650 K
propertyland (commercial)
41,000 sq feet \$60 ,per sq feet
propertyland near town
6000 sq feet \$850 K

TIME SHARE FOR RENT

Paradise Villas X-mas
\$850 also Bonaire Fliming
Beach 12/21/28 \$625 Studio
for sale Divi Golf Rm 4201
wk 35 8/29 - 25 wks left \$1998
Local 565 9394 until 12/21 or
508 651 0016
E-mail: rmwjmw@aol.com

FOR RENT

Paradise Beach Villas
wk one jan 4-11-2020
2 bdr suite Beach Ocean Front
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Editor

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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors

Richard Brooks
Jeancarlo Trinidad

Sales

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto
Pilar Flores

Columnists

Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Shanella Pantophlet
Steve Francees
Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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and Studio Rm 128
Divi Dutch Village \$1995 or BO
Divi Village wks 17 Studio 4/25
24 weeks left \$1800 BO
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508 651 0016
E-mail: rmwjmw@aol.com

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Paradise Beach Villas
1BR wk# 46 \$8500
Phase 2, 2nd floor
Ocean/Pool View
Contact: deleodoors@gmail.com
(stateside)203-558-7592



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Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

IMSAN 24 Hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:
Eagle Tel. 587 9011
San Nicolas:
Centro Medico Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

CRUISES



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Freedom of the Seas

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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Women in Difficulties
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Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118



Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count stronger than ever

By **KATHERINE ROTH**

It's been 120 years since New York ornithologist Frank Chapman launched his Christmas Bird Count as a bold new alternative to what had been a long-time Christmas tradition of hunting birds. Today, the annual count continues, stronger and more important than ever.

"He realized that we were over-harvesting birds and something had to be done," says Geoff LeBaron, who has led The National Audubon Society's massive community science effort for more than 30 years. "People get very passionate about the Christmas Bird Count," he says. "It's fun and it's a tradition, but it's also crucially important to the creatures we love."

Recent studies have found declining bird populations and threats of extinction from climate change, habitat loss and other causes. The Christmas count has become one of the most important bird databases because of its scale and longevity.

The first Christmas Bird Count was done by just 27 people at 25 locations across North America, mostly in the Northeast. Last year's count involved over 79,000 observers in 2,615 areas in the hemisphere, most in the United States and Canada, with an increasing number in Latin America and the Caribbean, LeBaron says.

Bird count parties, as the gatherings of volunteers are called, are held in every state in the United States and every province in Canada, as well as in many parts of Mexico and Colombia.

"It's such a great tradition and is making a huge contribution to science. I



In this Dec. 22, 2010, file photo, Bart Siegel of New Orleans looks through binoculars for birds during the National Audubon Society's annual Christmas bird count on the Gulf Coast in Grand Isle, La.

Associated Press

bring my daughter along with me every year, starting from when she was 3 and we participated in the Madison, Wisconsin, count," says Brooke Bateman, senior climate scientist at Audubon. "The longevity of the count is amazing, and I doubt anyone could have imagined in 1900 that it would still be going on now."

This year's bird count kicked off on Dec. 14 and continues through Jan. 5, 2020. Anyone can participate by going on the Christmas-BirdCount.org website. Participants do not need to be members of Audubon. The site shows all the active Christmas Bird Count groups so you can find ones near you that are still accepting more participants.

If your home is within a bird count circle, you can even do a count in your backyard just make sure you let the count leader in your area know in advance.

Despite the project's name, few of the annual bird count parties take place on Christmas itself although one in Chicago does so it's possible to participate in more than one bird count party.

"There's a guy in Iowa who tries to do 23 counts each year, but most people don't do that," says LeBaron.

The methodology of the count has been standardized since the 1950s, and is run by a huge community of knowledgeable bird-count party organizers and data compilers.

Each bird count party tries to document all the birds seen or heard within a given 15-mile-diameter circle in one calendar day from midnight to midnight at any point during the three-week period.

"That's a pretty large area, so we encourage people to gather together as many people as they can to cover the area. We want to be careful not to double-count anything, so each person in a bird count party should be assigned to their own sector," LeBaron explains.

"The party leaders and

compilers know the birds well, so it's a great opportunity for learning and mentoring," he says.

As people get to know the birds and the birders in their area, they tend to become pretty attached, says LeBaron, who began participating in the count while a graduate student in Rhode Island. He returns there for the count every year.

"I have Christmas Bird Count friends I really only see at the bird count each year," he says.

Although trends documented by the Christmas Bird Count aren't clear from one year to the next because of differences in weather, if you look at the data from one decade to the next, you can see trends.

"The great majority of the species have moved northward significantly and somewhat inland as early winter temperatures are moderating," LeBaron says.

"The climate is always changing, but it's the rate of change that's so much greater now. Life forms are not used to adapting that quickly."

"The work that participants in the bird count are doing is so important," he says. "Even if you go out and you don't see any birds at all, that's valuable information." □

Mediterranean pen shell listed as critically endangered

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A fan mussel found only in the Mediterranean was officially added to the list of critically endangered species, after scientists recorded a dramatic decline in its population numbers caused by a newly discovered pathogen.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature said in a press release this week that its updated Red List includes the noble pen shell, or *Pinna nobilis*, the Mediterranean's largest mollusk. The pen shell, which can grow to more than a meter (3 feet) tall,

contributes to clear water by filtering out organic particulates. For centuries it provided humans with food and one of the world's rarest materials: sea silk spun from the fibers with which it secures itself to the seabed.

A protected species, the pen shell was already under pressure from pollution, illegal fishing, habitat loss, invasive species and climate change. "However, none of these threats have led to the extremely widespread and rapid population declines caused by the ongoing disease," the

IUCN said. The new pathogen first appeared in 2016 along the Spanish coast and has since spread across the Mediterranean, with an 80-100% death rate.

Last year, when scientists discovered it had spread to Greek waters, they told The Associated Press the species was at risk of extinction. The IUCN said there was an "urgent need" to set up a regional monitoring program for the pen shell, and that further research was needed to understand the disease and find ways of limiting its spread. □

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A tattoo at a time, Afghan woman takes on society's taboos

By TAMEEM AKHGAR

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

— A female tattoo artist, a rarity in ultra-conservative Afghanistan, is taking a big risk with every customer she takes on.

It's been 18 months since Suraya Shaheedi started her mobile tattoo shop in the capital, Kabul. She's received death threats for taking on the taboo of the ink-on-skin drawings she does — as well as being a single woman willing to work with men.

"I have struggled a lot, even been threatened with death, because people in Afghanistan think doing tattoos is haram," she said, using the Arabic word meaning prohibited by religion.

"Whether my customers are men or women doesn't matter to me. I do tattoos for both," says Shaheedi, a 26-year-old, divorced single mother.

In a black curtained room, surrounded by his friends, a young customer shrieks in pain as the needle pierces and inks his skin.

"I can't leave the profession I love," Shaheedi adds. She easily gets customers, whether men or women, as social attitudes toward tattoos loosen up and more ink parlors open. It's the kind of small, but important change that Shaheedi



In this Saturday, 9, 2019, photo, Suraya Shaheedi, 26, Tattoo artist, left, pierced tattoo to a male customer in Kabul, Afghanistan.

feels a return of Taliban rule could threaten.

After decades of war, Afghans want peace. A big concern for many like Shaheedi is that U.S.-led peace talks with the Taliban will boost the militant group.

"I am happy if the Taliban return results in peace, but if they disagree with my work and impede the freedom and progress of women, then I will be the first to stand against them," she vowed.

Women like Shaheedi have carved out a space

for themselves in a society where custom heavily restricts women's roles and education. Close to 40% of Afghanistan's eligible girls are not allowed by their families to go to school, and almost 20% are forced by their families to leave school after grade six, according to a survey by the Asia Foundation released this year.

In areas under the Taliban, who now control or hold sway over roughly half of the country, women are not allowed to leave their

homes without a male escort. The insurgent group ruled Afghanistan with a harsh version of Islamic law from 1996 to 2001, when the U.S. invaded.

Shaheedi divorced her husband eight years ago while she was pregnant. She and her son now live with her parents. Her father supports her work, even though Afghanistan's patriarchal society often forbids a woman from touching a man to whom she is not related or married.

Her parents and elder

brother persuaded her to become a tattoo artist, Shaheedi said, after she got her first tattoo while visiting Turkey — an arrow piercing the image of an eye on her right hand, which she says symbolizes overcoming adversity.

Shaheedi's father, Hussain, 58, believes the strict customs controlling women in Afghanistan need to change. "I support my daughter in every way, and she makes me proud the way she's stood against this taboo," he said.

Shaheedi uses Instagram and other social media to find and meet customers. She prefers not to keep a parlor with a fixed address out of concerns for her safety.

She also does manicures and makeup. When she met one customer recently at a hair salon, the customer's husband recognized her from her social media pages as being the tattoo artist "Aho," the nickname she uses online. The husband threatened to kill Shaheedi if she kept posting images of her tattoo work on social media.

Tattoos were common in some of Afghanistan's rural areas, especially among Pashtun and Hazara women, but the ink piercings were used sparingly, often as only a few green dots on the face. □

Associated Press

South Carolina man who inspired movie "Radio" dead at 73

Associated Press

ANDERSON, S.C. (AP)

— James "Radio" Kennedy, the man who was a fixture on the sidelines of a South Carolina high school's football games for decades and whose life inspired a Hollywood movie, has died. He was 73.

T.L. Hanna High School Athletic Director John Cann confirmed Kennedy's death Sunday morning on the school's sports website. The cause of death wasn't immediately released.

"Please keep his family in your prayers in this diffi-

cult time," Cann said in the statement.

News outlets reported that Kennedy, who had developmental disabilities, became famous around the state for his love of the T.L. Hanna High School football team and his regular appearance at games since the 1960s.

"He was just a fine, fine man," former T.L. Hanna football coach Harold Jones told The Anderson Independent Mail. "We all loved him. We will miss him incredibly."

The 2003 film "Radio," starring Cuba Gooding Jr. in the title role, focused on

Kennedy's relationship with Jones, portrayed by Ed Harris. Kennedy got the nickname "Radio" because he always carried a transistor radio, according to Carolyn Dawkins.

She worked in a department store annex in the early 1970s when Kennedy would come by several times a week to talk high school sports with the store manager.

"Radio was the heart and soul of T.L. Hanna for over 50 years, and the impact he made in our community can't be overstated," Kyle Newton, a spokesman for Anderson School. □



In this Sept. 19, 2003 file photo James "Radio" Kennedy stands with the T.L. Hanna High School varsity football team behind him just before Friday night's game against Fort Mill in Fort Mill, S.C.

Associated Press

Greta Gerwig's 'Little Women' is a new classic

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — There is a wild urgency to Greta Gerwig's "Little Women" that hardly seems possible for a film based on a 150-year-old book. But such is the magic of combining Louisa May Alcott's enduring story of those four sisters with Gerwig's deliciously feisty, evocative and clear-eyed storytelling that makes this

"Little Women" a new classic. While no shortage of "Little Women" adaptations exist, Gerwig makes hers modern and sharp, while still adhering to its traditional roots. And in playing a bit with the chronology and instilling depth and nuance where many films have instead chosen shortcuts, Gerwig has made the most full-realized interpretation



This image released by Sony Pictures shows, Emma Watson, from left, Florence Pugh, Saoirse Ronan and Eliza Scanlen in a scene from "Little Women."

Associated Press

of this well-worn material for one simple reason: She lets Amy, Beth, Jo and Meg grow up. Of course others have too, but it usually comes at the end of the film as more of a coda which can't help but feel somewhat melancholy: It's the death of childhood, after all, when dreams are dashed, reality steps in, practicality trumps romantic fantasies and, most crushingly for many

a "Little Women" fan, Amy ends up with Laurie. Gerwig flips Alcott's narrative to allow her characters to be women first, instead of children. Jo (Saoirse Ronan) is introduced when she is already on her own trying to be a writer and making compromises all over the place (with her rate, her name, which she declines to use on her stories, and what her characters do).

Meg (Emma Watson) is living her life with two kids, a husband and a yearning for finer things. Beth (Eliza Scanlen) is still at home. And Amy (Florence Pugh) is in Paris with Aunt March (Meryl Streep) studying to paint and strategically plotting out a future that involves a wealthy husband. In their adult present, Gerwig finds thematically similar chapters in their past to flash back to. □

A fictional look at the role of 'oppo' research

By **WILL LESTER**
Associated Press
"Oppo" (Ecco/Harper Collins), by Tom Rosenstiel Investigator Peter Rena



This cover image released by Ecco shows "Oppo" a novel by Tom Rosenstiel.

Associated Press

and his partner Randi Brooks are taking on the timely topic of opposition research in the new political thriller "Oppo" by Tom Rosenstiel. The novel looks at the story of Wendy Upton, a centrist Republican senator offered the VP slot by leading presidential candidates from both parties. Very soon, she gets a mysterious threatening call that could derail her career. She hires Rena, Brooks and their investigative team to find out who is threatening her and what damaging info they have on her. This may seem familiar as the country is going through an impeachment inquiry with opposition

research as a central theme. Rosenstiel was a long-time Washington reporter who has closely followed capital politics as a reporter, researcher and media leader for decades. His novels have followed developments surrounding the search for a Supreme Court justice, a political firefight over a deadly terrorist attack and now, the role of opposition research. Through the adventures of Rena and Brooks, he tells how these political dramas can play out, with a good eye for Washington detail and characters. □

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SUN 2:00 | 3:20 | 4:45 | 6:05 | 7:30 | 8:50

CXC MON-THU 5:50 | 8:30

FRI 5:50 | 8:30 | 11:10

SAT 3:10 | 5:50 | 8:30 | 11:10

SUN 3:10 | 5:50 | 8:30

PBP MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

SAT-SUN 1:20 | 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

SPANISH MON-THU 5:10 | 7:50

FRI 5:10 | 7:50 | 10:30

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SUN 2:30 | 5:10 | 7:50

BLACK CHRISTMAS

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-FRI 6:25 | 8:40

SAT-SUN 1:55 | 4:10 | 6:25 | 8:40

PBP MON-FRI 5:15 | 7:25 | 9:35

SAT-SUN 1:00 | 3:05 | 5:15 | 7:25 | 9:35

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2 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS

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PH MON-FRI 6:00 | 8:35

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PBP MON-FRI 3:50 | 4:45 | 6:15 | 8:40

SAT-SUN 1:25 | 2:25 | 3:50 | 4:45 | 6:15 | 8:40

21 BRIDGES

PH MON-FRI 9:30

SAT-SUN 4:30 | 9:30

QUE LEONES

PH MON-THU 6:10 | 8:30

FRI 6:10 | 8:30 | 10:50

SAT 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30 | 10:50

SUN 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30

PBP MON-THU 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20

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Rapper Scarface in runoff for Houston City Council seat

JOHN L. MONE
Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — As a member of Houston's pioneering rap group The Geto Boyz, Brad Jordan co-wrote the early 1990s hip-hop anthem "Mind Playing Tricks on Me." Now, the 49-year-old rapper better known as Scarface is working to ensure Houston voters that no, their minds are not playing tricks on them: He is running for City Council, and he's a serious candidate. Jordan says he knows his celebrity carried him into a run-off election slated for Saturday. But he's hoping he can persuade the voters who got him there to turn out again so he can represent the council's District D. "You can sit back and point out the problems or you can address them and bring solutions to the table," Jordan said Tuesday, referring to chronic poverty and crime that afflicts his neighborhood. With more than 200,000 residents, District D stretches



In this Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2019, Rapper turned political candidate, Brad "Scarface" Jordan, left, visits with voter Michele Lemon and her son outside of an early voting location in the Sunnyside neighborhood of Houston, Texas.

Associated Press

into the south and south-east sides of Houston. 2017 data compiled by the current city council member, Dwight Boykins, says African Americans make up 53% percent of the district. Thirty percent of the pop-

ulation earns less than \$25,000 a year, and although that figure has risen over the past two decades, it's still a plurality. While campaigning, voters ask him what he plans to do if he's elected, but many

can't help themselves and ask to take a smartphone photo with him. Though his name recognition is his chief asset in his mostly African American district, Jordan insists that his Scarface persona is part

of his past, not his future. Political observers note that two big obstacles lie in Jordan's path to getting elected. "Voter turnout for run-offs is usually low," said Mark Jones, a political science fellow at the Baker Institute at Rice University. "He needs to improve voter turnout from his home ground in subdivisions like Sunnyside," Adams said. "Older African Americans may be not swayed by the notion a hip-hop artist can be in public office." Jordan's opponent, Dr. Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, may be more to such voters' liking. "My belief is that City Council is not a training ground, it's a proving ground. I've already proven my record," said Evans-Shabazz.

The 66-year-old sits on the Houston Community College Board of Trustees and the executive committee of the local NAACP, and she worked for the Houston Independent School District as an education evaluation specialist. □

Standing ovation in Milan for Domingo's 50th anniversary

By COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Opera star Placido Domingo received a standing ovation for his 50th anniversary gala concert at La Scala on Sunday and returned the appreciation with a rare a cappella performance. Standing alone on the stage holding three yellow roses, Domingo serenaded the audience with a favorite Spanish zarzuela, "Non Puede Ser." By then, after more than half an hour of applause and a standing ovation rare for the storied Milan opera house, Domingo and his co-stars for the evening, the choir and orchestra had already performed two encores. He alone emerged for the third. Domingo, 78, appeared overwhelmed by the re-



In this Aug. 28, 2019, file photo, opera singer Placido Domingo performs during a concert in Szeged, Hungary.

Associated Press

ception, and at one point kissed the stage where he performed for the first time on Dec. 7, 1969, in the title role of Verdi's "Ernani." In

all, he has sung 135 times on the La Scala stage, in 22 operas. The La Scala anniversary fell during a year that has

seen U.S. opera houses cancel Domingo's scheduled appearances, following reports by The Associated Press that more than 20

women had accused the star of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexually charged behavior. Domingo has denied the allegations, and after a period of silence, only recently has begun giving interviews to select publications ahead of European appearances. In the interviews he claimed he always behaved like a gentleman and said he never abused his power. He also has said he intends to continue performing at least through his planned engagements running through 2021. While in the United States all of his published dates were canceled, the singer has received overwhelming support from Europe's opera houses which have all maintained his dates and fans alike. □

White gold: Cyprus' halloumi cheese entangled in politics

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS

Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) —

Dairy farmers on Cyprus refer to halloumi as "white gold." The salty, rubbery cheese made from goats' and sheep's milk and prized for its ability to withstand a grill without melting is the country's leading export.

Cypriot authorities have spent years trying to get the European Union to recognize halloumi, or hellim in Turkish, as a traditional product of the east Mediterranean island nation.

Receiving the EU's top quality mark — the "Protected Designation of Origin" — would mean only halloumi made in Cyprus could be marketed abroad under that name.

The nation's farmers and producers want the Cyprus-specific designation to keep makers of inferior cheeses in other countries from claiming a slice of their market of over 200 million euros (\$222 million). Cypriot producers say demand from overseas is projected to hit new highs in the next few years, thanks to heat-tolerant halloumi's growing popularity as a meat alternative.

However, ethnically divided Cyprus' complex politics so far have stymied the bid to protect the halloumi name. The difficulty lies in a dispute



In this photo taken Wednesday Dec. 11, 2019, Cyprus' halloumi cheeses are seen after salting at a farm in Kampia village near Nicosia, Cyprus.

Associated Press

over how to lawfully get cheese made in the country's breakaway northern third to foreign markets. The self-declared Turkish Cypriot state is recognized only by Turkey and goods produced there cannot be exported directly.

Cyprus was split along ethnic lines in 1974 when Turkey invaded in the wake of a coup by supporters of union with Greece. The country joined the EU in 2004, but EU rules and regulations only apply to the southern, Greek Cypriot part of the island led by an internationally recognized government. A European Parliament member from Cyprus has accused the EU's executive com-

mission of letting the PDO application for halloumi grow moldy. The government hopes the new European Commission seated last month will find a way around the quandary.

Halloumi/hellim was put on track for an exclusive geographic designation amid much fanfare in 2015, when relaunched negotiations between the rival Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders brimmed with hope of delivering a deal to reunify the island as a two-zone federation.

A compromise was struck for the Bureau Veritas — a European body that certifies food and agricultural products — to perform checks on halloumi/hellim produced on both sides of the ethnic divide to ensure it met EU health and safety standards.

But the peace talks eventually collapsed, and the application has languished since then.

The Cypriot government says the agreement foresaw the export to European markets of vetted, Turkish Cypriot-produced cheese through EU-recognized ports in the south. Britain, Sweden and Germany currently are the top three markets for Cyprus' halloumi.

But Turkish Cypriot authorities say there was no such

understanding. They accuse Greek Cypriots of blocking the European Commission's effort to enable halloumi/hellim exports from the island's north.

"Turkish Cypriot producers should be able to export PDO-registered hellim/halloumi as they deem viable," Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce President Turgay Deniz said. "They should not be restricted to trading across (the dividing line) and via the ports in the south."

According to Deniz, 13 Turkish Cypriot halloumi/hellim producers export around 30 million euros (\$33 million) worth of the cheese to Turkey and Gulf countries. The

cheese reaches Gulf nations through Turkey.

Cyprus' Agriculture Ministry says it intends to keep pushing to clinch the exclusive mark and "to solve soon the remaining issues relating to the registration of halloumi/hellim for the benefit of all Cypriot producers."

The European Commission says it's in contact with the Cypriot government and Turkish Cypriots to "ensure an outcome." But Cypriot European Parliament member, Costas Mavrides, alleges the Commission is "arbitrarily" stalling its approval for halloumi to get the PDO. He said there's no legal reason for the cheese not to gain the designation and that the only step that's left is the green light from the Commission.

Mavrides is urging the Cypriot government to take the matter to the EU Court of Justice so halloumi/hellim gets the coveted moniker. Farmers' organizations fully back the government's PDO drive for halloumi. But curiously, a segment of the cheese-making community is voicing its dissent at the cheese clinching the designation amid concerns that this could lead to job losses and shrinking revenue. For halloumi/hellim to secure the designation, it must conform to a Cyprus government directive that it must contain at least 51% sheep's and goats' milk. □



In this photo taken Wednesday Dec. 11, 2019, Aphrodite Philippou, 73, makes Cyprus' halloumi cheese at a farm in Kampia village near Nicosia, Cyprus.

Associated Press



In this photo taken Wednesday Dec. 11, 2019, a baby goat sit as the sheep take they food at 'Riverland' farm in Kampia village near Nicosia, Cyprus.

Associated Press